3/3/30

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA IN AMERICA

(*An Apostle of Monism*)

WORKS BY
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

LIFE BEYOND DEATH
TRUE PSYCHOLOGY
SCIENCE OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA
ATTITUDE OF VEDANTA TOWARDS RELIGION
MYSTERY OF DEATH
HOW TO BE A YOGI
MEMOIRS OF RAMAKRISHNA
INDIA AND HER PEOPLE
PATH OF REALIZATION
SAYINGS OF RAMAKRISHNA
IDEAL OF EDUCATION
DOCTRINE OF KARMA
LECTURES IN INDIA
PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
REINCARNATION
SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT
SELF-KNOWLEDGE
DIVINE HERITAGE OF MAN
GREAT SAVIOURS OF THE WORLD
HUMAN AFFECTION AND DIVINE LOVE
SONGS DIVINE
BHAGAVAD GITA THE SYNTHESIS
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS WORK
WHY A HINDU ACCEPTS CHRIST AND REJECTS CHURCHIANITY

SISTER SHIVANI
MARY LE PAGE

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA IN AMERICA

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH
CALCUTTA-6 : INDIA

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DEDICATED TO
THOSE "SCHOLARS OF LIFE"
WHO FIND IN VEDANTA
THE SOURCE AND SUBSTANCE OF THE LAW

NOTICE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The second edition of the *An Apostle of Monium* is published with the new name: *Swâmi Abhedananda in America*. It is an authentic account of the manifold activities of Swâmi Abhedânanda by one of his disciples, who lived with him and attended to him all along during his stay in America. The cultural and religious activities of Swâmi Abhedânanda in the West will unfold an important chapter in the 'History of the Râmakrishna Movement in the West' and it is also an important contribution to the cultural and religious and even political history of India.

We shall be glad if this edition gets the appreciation from the readers from all corners of the globe as it did previously.

Publishers

Ramakrishna Vedanta Math,
19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street,
Calcutta-6. 28.3.1958.

NOTICE TO THE FIRST EDITION

It is said that pious wish never remains unfulfilled but becomes a reality by a power beyond human sight. The Authorities of the Râmakrishna Vedânta Math in Calcutta for several years were eagerly expecting to publish a volume on Swâmi Abhedânanda's achievements and activities in the West by one of his able American desciples. For, they knew that many facts and figures could be gleaned from such a volume which would form an important chapter in the proposed English biography of the Swâmi. The work of writing an elaborate English biography of the Swâmi had already been started at a time when they had no certainty of getting necessary materials. Finding no other way, however, they at last set themselves to collecting its materials from other authentic records at their disposal.

But the will of the Supreme was otherwise. In 1943 good news came from Sister Shivâni (Mrs. Mary LePage), an ardent disciple of the Swâmi, residing at Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. Her letter gave an assurance that a large volume on Swâmi Abhedânanda's glorious career in America was in the making. The accomplishment of this noble work by the Sister never proved easy. There came again and again waves of obstacles and difficulties. But every time she overcame these dangers and difficulties with the help of an invisible guide. She underwent sleepless labour for years and fully succeeded at last in gaining her object. Now she has brought out her book with its most fitting name, *the Apostle of Monism.*

We are much indebted to Dr. Basu Kumar Bâgchi, a member of the staff of the Neuropsychiatric (Brain Wave Research) Institute at the University Hospital, Arbor, Michigan, for kindly contributing his learned Introduction to this present volume. Dr. Bâgchi had a close intimacy with Swâmi Abhedânanda during the years 1938-39. The learned Doctor with his keen sensibility and critical observation discovered in the Swâmi an immensity of knowledge, purity and spiritual grandeur. This he has described with a rare skill in his Introduction and as such it has enhanced the importance of this book greatly. No amount of words is sufficient to express our gratitude. to him.

The Apostle of Monism has a novelty of its own. Written as these accounts are by an unbiased disciple, they are free from all the defects and demerits which one comes across many of the reminiscences of spiritual Teachers by their disciples and followers. The records of the present Authoress nowhere and never are tinged with bigotry,, myth-making and exaggeration. She has viewed the life of her Master with a rational mind. Her attempts for representing the Swâmi's life, personality, genius and greatness have proved successful because of her power of reason and comprehension.

Going through these pages the readers will see the Swâmi in various phases of his character. In this book the Swâmi is seen not only as the wise and able exponent of Vedânta or an outstanding figure of Indian civilization and culture but it also reveals the Swâmi as a loving Master healing the wounds of many souls that came unto him from far and near. The present book has also an additional importance of its own. Along with many new incidents of the Swâmi's life in the West it also throws much light upon the history of the Vedânta movement in the distant lands far across the seas. So, it will not only enlighten the disciples of this Apostle of Monism but also his numerous admirers living in various parts of the world.

Sister Shivâni has left us in a heavy debt by presenting this long-looked-for book to us and to the reading public at large. In a few faltering words it is not possible to exactly express the fervent feelings of our grateful hearts. We only send our greetings and good wishes to her and to those devoted souls who at all times stood by her to accomplish this noble and arduous task.

Publishers

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH,
19B, Râjâ Râjkrishna Street,
CALCUTTA.
15th August 1947

PREFACE

My object in this volume is to write the life of one whom I loved and admired, Swâmi Abhedânanda, the great Apostle of Vedânta. In such an undertaking as this much depends on personal knowledge because the records at my disposal are few and those that are available are not always authentic.

The school of thought represented by the Swâmi is at times diametrically opposed to the one with which I am familiar but his school teaches the same oneness of the Spiritual Law as preached by the immortal prophet of Israel viz., "I and My Father are one." Abhedânanda is the greatest representative of Monists and as known to the West through a quarter of a century I can find no one who preached so selfless and so coherent a philosophy and gospel of the Advaita Monism.

Two years before, attempting the writing of this book, I had before me the collected data of the Society, covering a period of thirty-five years. These records and the manuscripts perhaps one-third finished, were destroyed by the fire which burned our home to its foundations, together with my own letters from the Swâmi, their notes and comments, instructions as well as important copies and some originals of official letters regarding issues pending or concluded. Many sources and books of reference now out of print and unobtainable have been lost. It has been a task of much endeavour to verify dates even approximately and names and this fact accounts for seeming omissions in these annals.

Therefore, the biography is unique in that it is largely from memory and inspiration. The great love accorded to this Apostle by his disciples, students and congregations throughout America and the West reminds one that only a personage of high spiritual stature could evoke a devotion so deep and spontaneous.

To all who have assisted me in this record I wish to extend my deep appreciation. . To Swâmi Ashokânanda of San Francisco, and to Swâmi Bodhânanda of New York, for their encouragement; to Dr. B. K. Bâgchi who has so kindly written the Introduction and who met the Apostle during those last years before his *Mahâsamâdhî.*

Dr. Bâgchi had before his return to India for several years of residence there, made a dedication ceremony naming several plots of land on Pleasant View Mesa in Antelope Valley as Abhedânanda Acres after the Apostle as a memorial to our beloved Master. Swâmi Abhedânanda felt a warm affection for Dr. Bâgchi and never forgot this service rendered to his cause. It seemed therefore to the author and those residing here that Dr. Bâgchi was the one most fitted to write the Introduction, and to this the Brothers at the Râmakrishna Vedânta Math in Calcutta lent their hearty accord. I might add that the Doctor has been associated in Fellowship work at Bose Institute of Science in Calcutta, India, and in the West has been associated in Psychological and laboratory research with several universities. He is at present on the staff of the Neuropsychiatric (Brain Wave Research) Institute at the University Hospital, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Dr. Bâgchi in his Introduction to this work has contributed a matchless exposition of the historical and scientific trends of American-religious thought of the Nineteenth Century. He has faithfully analysed and given fitting emphasis to the Concord spirit which had no small part in shaping America's formative philosophy. But let me remind both the reader and the scholar to whose attention these pages may come, that these sons of India, Abhedânanda and Vivekânanda, were *men of realization,* whereas Emerson, Thoreau and Olcott were only transcendentalists.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Starich, Miss Annie V. Hagelin (Sister Pârvatî), Mrs. Alice I. Churchwell, Mrs. French (Sister Sarolâ), Mrs. Hansbrough (Sister Sânti), Mrs. Jessie Wagner Stark, Mr. H. Deane Stark, Sitâ LePage, and to all others who lent their assistance, to these endeavours, and to my husband Thomas Edward LePage (Haridâs), that years to the Master is incomparable, without whose aid the undertaking of this work would have been impossible.

It has been a work both of inspiration and realization for never at any time have I felt the absence of my Teacher. To the Brothers in India I owe this opportunity for it was they who encouraged me to undertake the writing of the Swâmi's life and activities in America—and especially to the kindness of Swàmis Prajñânânanda and Sankarânanda whose insistent faith and understanding helped me over every obstacle.

Abhedânanda Acres
California, U.S.A.
April, 1945.

SHIVANI.

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INTRODUCTION

BY

BASU KUMAR BAGCHI, Ph.D.

AN APOSTLE OF MONISM

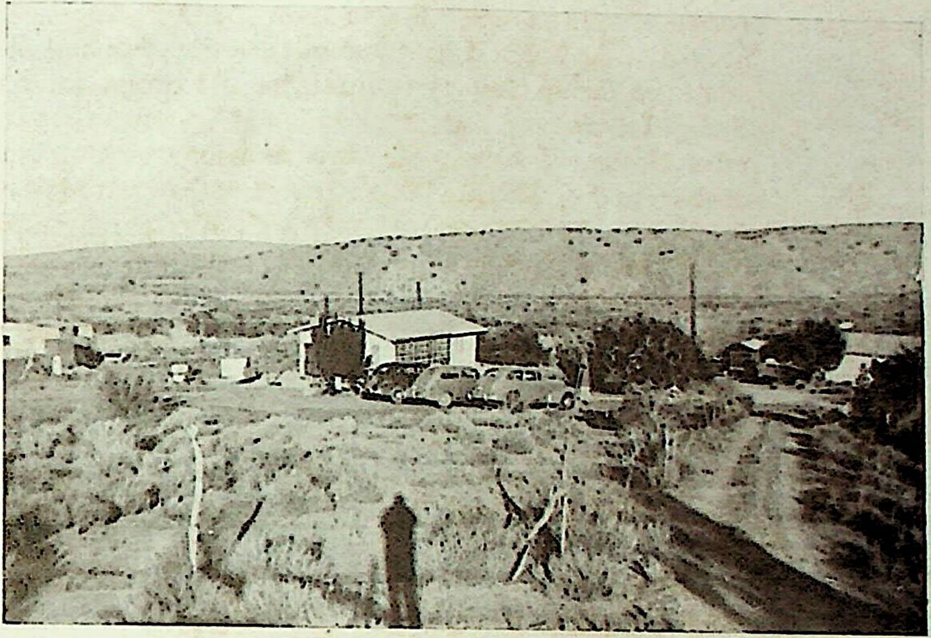
INTRODUCTION

WITH some hesitation I have yielded to the request of the Author to write an introduction to this book. This is primarily a noble document of devotion and hence, strictly speaking, an introduction should not be necessary. Devotion is beautiful even if it appears unintroduced. Nor does one of the noble Sons of India, Swâmi Abhedânanda, with whom the book deals, need any introduction to India. His contributions to culture and philosophy are well-known there. The author of the book may not be known to the people of India but her writing as set forth here will, I am sure, endear her to the Indian imagination on once it reaches the hands of the Indian people. There is a richness and yet a delicacy of presentation of the subtleties of thought and of the interpersonal relationship as far as she and her *Guru* are concerned that will be cherished by any Indian devotee. The freedom of style and some of the archaic forms and expressions give a blended flavour of the old and the new, and this would be welcome. Her writing has stood and will stand on its own merits and its merits are many. It should need no introduction. Even if it did, I have wondered whether I should write it. The book is not in the scientific field in which I am now engaged. I have left behind certain conventions and a certain type of missionary organization. This book mentions similar convention and similar organization, though of an entirely different calibre.

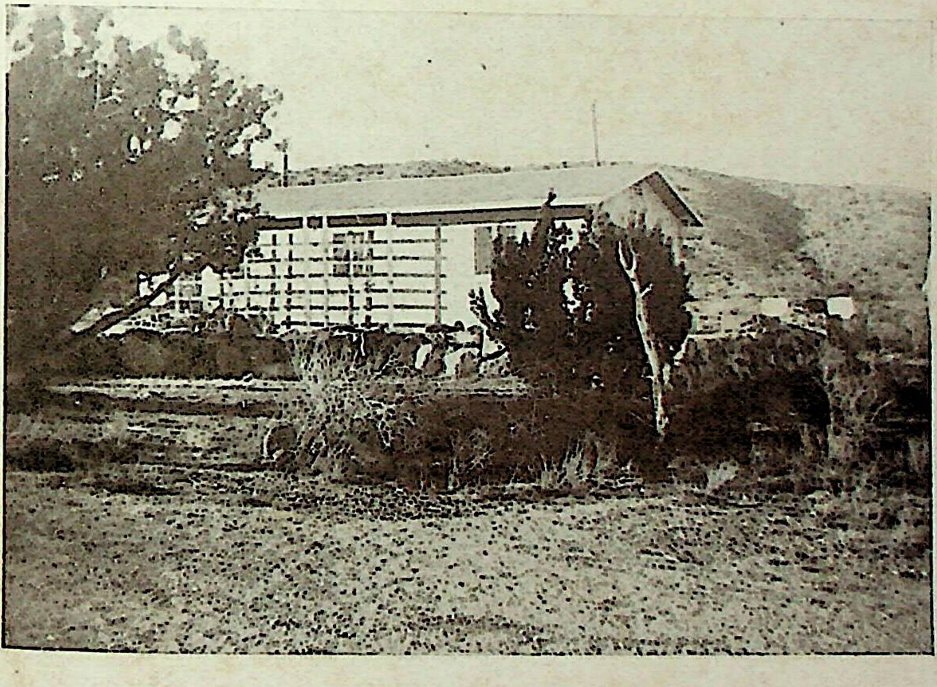
All these considerations are probably important, but on the other hand there are considerations which are equally important and which have compelled me. One of the considerations is my acquaintance with the writer and her surroundings. It is a pleasure and privilege to write something. India would like to know the immediate background of the book. I have known the writer, her husband and their family close to two decades and except for the Swâmi I dare say no one from India has known the family more closely. I have made short and long visits scores of times to their 279 acre Mesa where meet the great Mojave desert and the six thousand feet high Sierra ranges of California. Half-way ringed by these towering mountains and overlooking the seemingly endless desert, nestles their cottage, utter in its simplicity, more like an Indian hermitage than an American home of feathered beds and electric refrigerators. There whistle the dry desert and the mountain winds through the Joshua, pine, yucca trees and sage brush, there the stars keep their eternal vigil at night in the presence of silent and august hills. It is under this limitless vault of inspiration that the writer has practised Vedânta for many years as a householder with her husband and her children and has mused on her past contact with her teacher. It is here that the book was written. On the one hand this book would probably be an anachronism to the overactive, nervous and sophisticated section of America and on the other a surprise to those modern Indian *chelâs* of Western life who think science is religion and philosophy idle speculation.

Quite some time ago this place was named "Abhedânanda Acres". The simple ceremony of dedication over, many sat quietly on the ground drinking in the healing of the hills and the pines. Then came the "chug-chug" sound of the gasoline engine, pumping water, a scarcity in those regions, from the deep bowels of the desert soil and sending it to a highly placed small cement tank from which it was to run by gravity to the pipes and showers of the cottage. I then thought of the stark resignation to the elements and back-breaking hauling of water from the well to the kitchen in an Indian hermitage. But here Swâmi's Vedânta and America's science were combined—so it was not really a typical Indian hermitage. Yet there was not in this home

DIFFERENT SITES OF THE ABHEDANANDA ACRES, PEARBLOSSOM, CALIFORNIA, U. S. A.

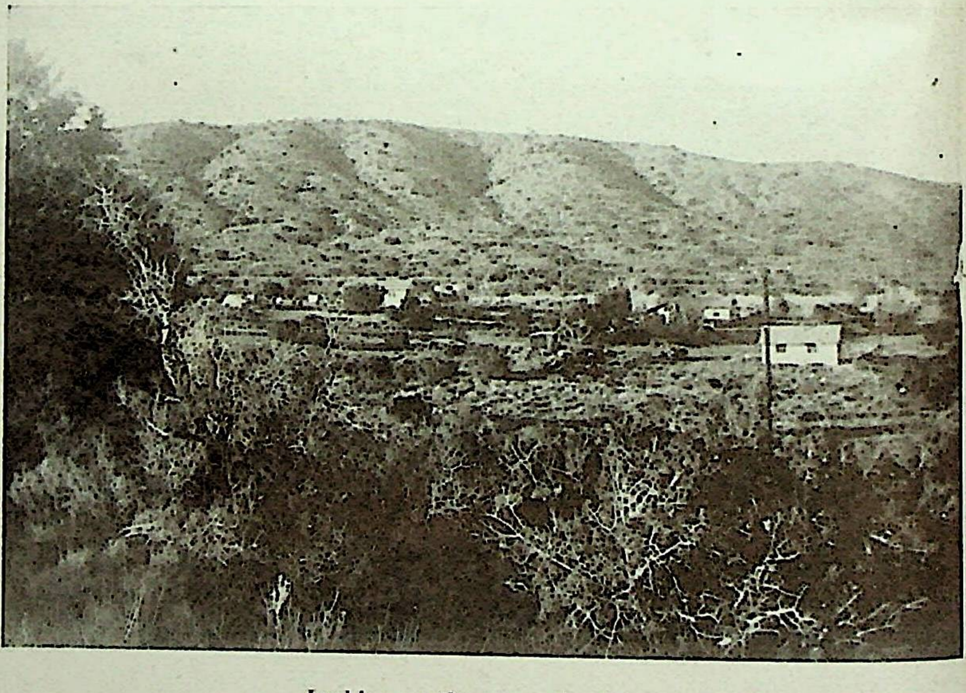


Looking east from the reservoir.



One of the cabins.

Looking south-east across a portion. The buildings are in the middle distance.



Looking north across the Acres.

the usual evidence of what many Indians would call luxuries. There was a heating stove, simple furniture and a good-sized family library of philosophical and religious books with a sprinkling of scientific literature. Gathered wood was the fuel, kerosene was used for the lamps and heated and wrapped iron bricks were used for keeping warm in bed in sub-freezing wintry nights. It is to this place that the family originally came as pioneers at a time when there was nothing without but an overpowering Nature and just a will within to build a home and an "Altar". And they did both.

To gain affluence was not the primary objective held before the sons and daughters of this family but they were expected to be practical. It was a fascination to watch the boys take apart and put together old automobiles, mixing mistakes with knowledge and finally making them actually run. They would drive proud miles in their home-repaired cars to the nearest store. To go ten bare and open miles to the next town to mail a letter or to shop or compare notes with an expert mechanic or printer would not be very unusual. At table or under the balmy evening sky they would listen to or join in discussions, the subjects ranging from politics through science and internationalism to *Nirvikalpa Samâdhî*. The boys are grown up now, two of them have been called by their country in the emergency of war, another is stationed in the Valley. The daughters are away, both of them married.

The writer is one of the company of unusual women who quietly keep alive at their hearths the almost smothered fires of civilization. She is a loving, understanding and yet a strict mother, she is a devoted wife and yet an independent debater, she is an enthusiastic sympathizer with any great cause. Her busy moments are for heavy household work and her easy moments for serious reading and writing where much of her life lies. Her hospitality is strictly of the Indian variety—never pleased until the guest is perfectly comfortable and at ease. Nothing is too good for the guest. She likes people, but she likes them in the abstract and lets what they are in the concrete settle its account on the social score with her. Occasionally she holds local writers' club meetings and informal religious gatherings on the Mesa. Once under her guidance her boys ran a hand press and then an automobile-connected press, and printed cards, books, magazines and a four-leaf weekly newspaper for the far-flung desert community. She still dreams that Savants of different countries following different lines will gather periodically in that place and impart their inspirations to the selected few. When she speaks of Abhedânanda the light that shines in her eyes shows what he meant to her. Never in her life nor in that of her husband has there been such a stirring influence as Abhedânanda. Often one can judge a teacher from his disciples.

Many years ago at a Boston restaurant an elderly gentleman came over and sat at my table an introducing himself started to talk. He was the President of the Tuberculosis Association of that section of the Country. Did I know Swâmi Abhedânanda? "Isn't it sort of unfair that you people send such brilliant men from India compared to the men that we send to your Country as Missionaries? I used to hear him. He was very convincing." I have heard spontaneous tributes paid to Abhedânanda by many I met in New York, Los Angeles, and other places.

I met the Swâmi for the first time much later in India. He was at the head of the Râmakrishna Vedânta Society in Calcutta. Natural graciousness was his. He was pleased to receive the greetings from some of his disciples in America which I conveyed to him. He impressed me as a dominant personality, a man of great weight and inner strength. We discussed certain topics and he related some of his experiences in his travels. In spite of his failing health he was attending to the usual details of his Mission. His illness did not seem to burden his spirit down, there was no tone of depression—but a spontaneity of reactions to the subjects of his interest. When I saw him later during the advanced stages of his illness (in 1938) he had the same spontaneity. His disciples told me how the night before his passing he called them in and informed them of the imminence of the event and assigned to them the details of the work. When his body was taken down the streets of Calcutta thousands of residents joined the procession to pay tribute to his memory.

It is not up to me, even if I had the capacity, to appraise the depth of learning and spiritual knowledge of the man the last few years of whose dedicated life I watched only from a distance. Nor is it for me to evaluate the interpretation he gave to Vedânta. Nor can I adequately estimate the influence he exerted on the thought of America. Posterity will judge him on the latter score. The present book is a contribution in the right direction made by one of his followers. Others may appear from the pens of historians interested in global contacts of cultures and religion who will have their own perspectives. Personally, I am glad that the first book about Swâmi Abhedânanda is written by an Occidental who has known him closely and whose life has been deeply touched by his message.

II

There is another reason why I have undertaken to write the Introduction. It is to call attention to the fact that a certain section of America was prepared to listen respectfully to Swâmi Vivekânanda and Swâmi Abhedânanda when they arrived here in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century. I shall devote some space to this point as the extent of America's preparation is probably not fully realized by many persons in India. In the first place, I refer to the preparation made possible by American transcendentalists primarily represented by Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott. This point has been touched upon by the writer. Emerson was a great leader of thought in Nineteenth Century

America, but he was not all American in his thinking. Protâp Chandra Mozomdar, head of the New Dispensation Brâhma Samâj writes in the memorial volume entitled *The Genius and Character of Emerson* edited by Franklin Benjamin Sanborn in 1884. "In whomsoever the Eternal Brahman breathes his unquenchable fire he was the Brahman. And in that sense Emerson was the best of Brâhmans. * * * Amidst the ceaseless, sleepless din and clash of Western materialism, the heat of restless energy, the character of Emerson shines upon India serene as the evening star. He seems to some of us a geographical mistake. He ought to have been born in India." Probably he was needed more in America at the time.

Emerson's writing is what it is mainly because of five intangibles—the Philosophy of Greece, the Ethics of China, the poetry of the Sufis, the Philosophy of India and himself. Possibly the strongest intangible that influenced him from the outside was the Philosophy of India. Anybody who has read his writings knows that the Over-Soul was "of a piece" with the Vedântic *Brahman,* his essay on compensation was a version of the Indian doctrine of *Karma,* and his systematic emphasis on the unity of being, spiritual outlook and contemplative intuition was primarily Indian. Every Indian interested in this question should read a book entitled *The Orient in American Transcendentalism, A Study of Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott,* written by Arthur Christy and published by the Columbia University Press of America in 1932. I am indebted to this book for some of the data presented here. Mr. Christy goes to source material, looks through the personal libraries of Emerson and his friends, hunts up references of withdrawal of books in the lending cards of the libraries of Harvard College and Boston Athenaeum and produces an inestimable book of literary and historical criticism.

Christy writes in the preface of his book: "An awareness of the fact that the Emersonians were a very potent factor in bringing the Oriental into American life has been increasing. 'It would be a matter of deep interest to know exactly how far the American spirit has been impregnated, directly or indirectly, by the infiltration of Hindu thought during the nineteenth century' writes Romain Rollând in his recent *Prophets of the New India,* 'for there can be no doubt that it has contributed to the strange moral and religious mentality of the modern United States * * *. I do not know whether any historian will be found to occupy himself seriously with the question. It is nevertheless a psychological problem of the first order intimately connected with the history of our civilization.' This book may be considered an attempt to write the first chapter of the general study Romain Rollând suggests, a study which he himself realized must commence with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Amos Bronson Alcott, three men at one time intimate friends and neighbours in Concord."

Emerson once wrote (*Journals,* edited by E. W. Emerson, VII, p. 511): "I owed—my friend and I owed —a magnificent day to the Bhagavat Gitâ. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."

In 1844 Emerson sent a communication to Carlyle in England in which he said: "You sometimes charge me with I know not what sky-blue, sky-void idealism. As far as it is a partiality, I fear I may be more deeply infected than you think me. I have very joyful dreams which I cannot bring to paper, much less approach to practice, and I blame myself not at all for my reveries, but they have not yet got possession of my house and barn * * *. I only worship Eternal Buddha in the retirements and intermissions of Brahma."

Thoreau writes: "I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Upanishads and of the Bhagavat Gitâ in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial" (Thoreau's Writings, II, 328-329.).

These utterances are not solitary exclamations but are representative samples indicating the extent to which the Concordians were imbued with the Indian spirit.

We must thank the British and French Orientalists, particularly the former, for bringing India to Concord and making it that much easier for the two later Vedântic Missionaries to preach their religion in America. "Practically all the translators and editors whose names appear in the formidable list of oriental books in Concord were members of one and sometimes both of these societies—The Asiatic Society of Bengal and Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. They were the first leaders in English investigation of Oriental literature" (Vide Christy, p. 42.).

Sir William Jones was the first President (1784-1794) of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Then there are other illustrious names of Orientalists connected with that Society—Charles Wilkins, Wilson, Colebrooke, Hodgson. Then later came Max Müller. Their voluminous translations of Indian scriptures and other literature were owned by Emerson or borrowed by him or for him from the libraries of Harvard College and Boston Atheneaum and mentioned in the Journals or books. A few examples will suffice: Jones' translations of the Institute of Manu was published in 1825 and read by Emerson and his friends in 1836; Wilson's *Vishnupurâna* published in 1840 and read in 1845; Jones' Works representing translations of and essays on Oriental literature, 6 volumes, 600 pages each, published in 1801 and borrowed in 1840 and 1850; Wilson's *Rig Veda Samhitâ* published in 1850-1854 and borrowed in 1855 and 1860; Roer's translation of *Sir Upanishads* in *Bibliotheca Indica* published in 1853 and read about the same time; Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays* on Hindu philosophy and translation of the most important *Upanishads* quoted by Emerson in 1845; Colebrooke's translation of

Sânkhya Kârikâ published in 1837 and borrowed in 1851; translations of *Vâsâparichhheda* (*Nyâya* philosophy) printed by Encyclopædia Press in Calcutta 1851 and received as a gift by Emerson from Thoreau; Burnouf's (French Orientalist) translation of *Bhâgavat Purân* published in 1840 and mentioned in 1866; and Duperron's (French Orientalist) translations of *Upanishads*, 2 volumes, published in 1801 and read quite some time later.

Sir William Jones was one of the most widely read and appreciated Orientalists in Concord. One of the earliest references to the study of the works of the Orientalists by Emerson was of the year 1821. He read in that year Teignmouth's *Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of Sir William Jones* published in 1806. Emerson was only nineteen at the time. Another early source material was the four volume History of Philosophy with chapters devoted to Indian philosophy written by the French author Degérendo, borrowed by Emerson in 1830 and 1831. Then he was only twenty-seven. Râmmohòn Roy's translation of the *Isa Upanishad* with Sankar's commentary printed by Hindoosthânee Press, Calcutta, 1816 and his other books and essays came to be known to Emerson when Emerson, the preacher, was breaking away from orthodox denominational thinking.

Sanborn, Emerson's biographer, states that for years Emerson was one of the very few Americans who owned a copy of the *Gitâ* and that his copy was even more widely used than that in the Harvard College library (*The Nation*, 90: 481, 1910, May 12). One of the earliest translations of *Gitâ* with which Emerson was acquainted was that by Charles Wilkins, the first Englishman to study Sanskrit. It was published in 1785.

Max Müller, a pupil of Burnouf and the general editor of the fifty volume series entitled *Sacred Books of the East* (1879-1910), sends a copy of his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* to Emerson with these words in it: "Dedicated to Ralph Waldo Emerson in memory of his visit to Oxford in May, 1873 and in acknowledgement of refreshment of head and heart derived from his writings during the last twenty five years." Max Müller was one of the few British Orientalists with whom Emerson was personally acquainted.

Emerson's life of spiritual dignity and his writings of superb power permeated through and through by the Indian spirit was a dominant influence in the world of American thought. As the writer in *International Encyclopædic* says of Emerson: "No other American man of letters probably has been so potent a source of inspiration to his fellows, nor seems more likely to contribute permanently to European thought."

Emerson's fame should not blind one to the fact that some of his writings have been severely criticized. Emerson's *"Brahma"* published in the *Atlantic Monthly* about the middle of the last century and mentioned in the body of the book stirred up a veritable hornets' nest in the eastern section of America. Even Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the most famous American men of letters writes in his book, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* in 1884 (page 397): "To the average Western mind it (the poem) is the nearest approach to a Taricillian Vaccuum of intelligibility that language can pump out of itself * * *. Of course, no one can hold Emerson responsible for the Yoga doctrine of Brahmaism which he has amused himself with putting in verse. The Oriental side of Emerson's nature delighted itself in these narcotic dreams, born in the land of the poppy and of hashish. They lend a peculiar charm to his poems, but it is not worth while to construct a philosophy out of them." Thus writes one of Emerson's ardent admirers, an eminent biographer and a great writer. He was also a teacher of anatomy representing as he did the point of view which William James later criticized, namely "Medical Materialism" which doubts all mystical perceptions and constructions. Be that as it may to the physical or biological scientists or to the matter-of-fact people, no matter how artistic or literary Emerson's poem would be silly, and to the orthodox Christians it would be blasphemous. I mention this to indicate that then, as now, reactions of a very large number of Americans to monistic or mystic philosophy would take on the one or the other hue. But there was and is another America. Emerson and his friends addressed themselves to that America and prepared it. When the Swâmis came later they addressed themselves to that America.

Despite Emerson's Orientalism it must be mentioned that there was something of the practical and proud Yankee in him. He certainly did not take whatever he found in Indian philosophy and literature. He took whatever he could make his own. He built on his own foundation through much of the material of that foundation and the superstructure came from India. Probably this is what it should be. As in the case of an individual every nation with a past and present should build its own culture, follow its own lines of thinking, probably influenced but not entirely superseded by other cultures and other lines of thinking, however good, unless that supercession is a result of an inner revolution or natural evolution. Accretion or addition is not growth. One hates to see the mystic philosophy of India degenerate into fortune-telling in an American beach pavilion.

To the great credit of the Concordians is their sincerity coupled with their humility and willingness to accept and incorporate the best of the East. Thoreau was a Yogî, a real functioning Yogî, practising contemplation by the hour, but not strictly to any particular Indian method; a vegitarian, living a life of simplicity, reading and writing and even holding to the view "civil disobedience". Mahâtmâ Gândhi acknowledges his debt to Thoreau in regard to his interpretation of civil disobedience and other matters of philosophical import. And India had inspired Thoreau, thus is completed the global circuit of dynamic ideas.

The third Concordian of the transcendental triumvirate was Alcott. He kept the fire of transcendentalism going. He was the prime mover in the formation and operation of the Concord School of Philosophy in the fourth quarter of the Nineteenth Century during the declining years of Emerson. He did much for India and his own country by being the first American to engineer in America the publication of Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia,* or the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha.[1] It saw the light of day in America in January 1880 through his personal efforts, just a year after its publication in England.

Arnold's father-in-law, Channing had written to Alcott to introduce the book to America. The publisher was glad to put it on the market. It was a literary sensation and spiritual enlightenment. Literate America could hardly believe that such a great character as Buddha ever lived. Even Holmes, the same Holmes who did not like the mystic side of Emerson, was carried away by the book and wrote an enthusiastically twenty-six pages on it in the *International Review.*

This event was just thirteen years before the arrival of Swâmi Vivekânanda at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. The influence of this book in bringing Indian thought to the notice of American Intelligentsia could not be negligible. Arnold's biographer writes in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (second supplement) about a quarter of a century following the publication of the book: "The poem aroused the animosities of many pulpits but there were sixty editions in England and eighty in America and translations were numerous."

There was another stream of thought that was doing its work silently in a limited field. It was the American Oriental Society organized in 1842 to carry out aims similar to those promoted by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and other

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1. See Henry S. Salt's *Company I Have Kept.* London George Allen and Uniwin Ltd., 1936, pp. 100-101.

learned Oriental societies in Continental Europe. Its influence reached only the interested scholars of America. Only a few books written by the members of this Society came to be read at Concord. The membership of this Society in 1893 was 306, today 903, including the Orientalists at different institutions of learning not only in this Country but abroad. Some years ago (1938)[1] it published a catalogue of about 8,000 original Indic manuscripts written in Sanskrit, Pâli, and other Indian languages, possessed by the Society and sixty-eight and thirty-eight private libraries in this Country and Canada. I have no information as to whether or not the Society's activities materially helped to prepare the ground for the Swâmis or rather the Swâmis' activities helped to re-stimulate the interest of this Society or other institutions with a deparment of Oriental studies, in Oriental research including collections of Indian manuscripts. There is a likelihood that the latter would be closer to the truth.

This point however should await further research for confirmation. Dr. John Henry Barrows, President of the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 writes in *Forum* (Vol. 18, p. 60, 1894-1895) that one of the first fruits of the Parliament of Religions was a gift of twenty thousand dollars from Mrs. Haskell toward a lectureship on comparative religion in the University of Chicago and another gift of one hundred thousand dollars from the same lady toward the establishment of an Oriental Museum for that University.

The present secretary of the American Oriental Society informs me that there was no official contact between the Society and the Swâmis but we know from the autobiographical material[2] that Abhedânanda at least personally

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1. Poleman.
2. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, edited by S. Râdhâkrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, George Allen & Uniwin Ltd., 1936. See the article *Hindu Philosophy in India* by Swâmi Abhedânanda, pp. 48-62.

knew several members of the Society. Professor Lanmann, Editor of the fifty volume *Harvard Oriental Series* and a member of the American Oriental Society met the Swâmi in William James' home in 1898 along with others. William James and the Swâmi had a long discussion in which others joined, including Lanmann.

One can believe that William James' Gifford Lectures which were delivered at Edinburgh a few years later (1901-1902) and were entitled *The Varieties of Religious Experience* treating the inner experiences of religion in a psychological way represent an intellectual stirring of the times. Besides being the first attempt at understanding mystical aspects of religion from a broad scientific angle the book showed the impact of Emerson's transcendentalism and Vivekânanda's Vedântism (Vivekânanda's works and Vedântism quoted on pp. 400, 419, 513 and 522, 37th Impression) and other sources of Oriental and Occidental mystical thought including Christianity. It favoured none, it tried to explain all on the basis of "the more" "our extra marginal self," a common denominator. Whether or not it has been successful in its explanation, I believe that historically the selection and the particular treatment of such a theme are in great part an effect of what went before and came after the arrival of the two Swâmis. Although by that time the Concord school of transcendentalism had vanished, its vast literature, the biographies of its exponents and the source material of the East which Concord had referred to and which had started to make its great appearance in America, have become established facts in the American thinking world. But everyone was not on the philosophical level. Hypnotism, a variant of socalled Indian occult powers practised by Indian men of mystery was broadcast by Baird and Mesmer in Europe as a dramatic panacea for some diseases. It touched America too. Then there were other cults deriving their inspiration from good, bad and indifferent India.

Thus were present in America two overlapping Indias

—the philosophical and logical India of Emerson and the mysterious and occult India of Baird, Theosophists and others—popularly satisfying and religio- or medico-clinically useful. Then the two Swâmis arrived as missionaries from India, the country that some part of America had heard so much about. The personality and power of Vivekânanda swept him through the country. That story need not be told here. The part that deals with Abhedânanda is fully in this book.

In illustration of this I enclose the leading editorial of the *Indian Mirror* of today (Jan. 21, 1897):

> What have you to say of the likelihood of America abandoning Christianity and adopting either Hinduism or Mohammedanism in its stead? Will you kindly reply to this question, limiting your response to about one hundred works? You are one of a number of prominent men and women in my beloved land to whom I am writing, making of each the above request.
>
> I desire to secure for wide circulation in India a symposium on India Hinduism and Mohammedanism in America. Or if you please, to be more particular, Swâmi Vivekânanda in America. I am, yours very sincerely."

This letter does not apparently seek to elicit information about Vivekânanda's part in quickening America's interest in Indian thought or Vivekânanda's influence but only information about coverts. Interest or influence is one thing and changing "tags", which much of conversion or adoption of a new religion means, is another thing. As far as I am aware the latter was of secondary importance to the Swâmis. I hope someday the central question of proselytizing will not be either this or that religion but how much of truth underlying each.

I shall quote two replies to the letter, as embodied in the pamphlet. James B. Angell, LL.D., President of the University of Michigan, and later appointed by President McKinley, U. S. Minister to Turkey: "Swâmi Vivekânanda has spent a good deal of time in this vicinity, sepecially in the city of Detroit, which is near us. He has been received with much politeness and his addresses have been listened to by many with interest, but I have yet to hear of a solitary convert whom he has made from Christianity to Hinduism. The likelihood of America's abandoning Christianity and adopting either Hinduism or Mohammedanism is, I think, rather less than the probability that the Ganges will reverse its current and run up into the Himalayan Mountains. No doubt the type of Christian doctrine and habits differ from age to age, but I believe that, in its essential principles, Christianity never had a stronger hold on American people than it has today. The question which you ask, about the possibility of America's adopting Hinduism or Mohammedanism, strikes every one in this country as simply preposterous. It is difficult to treat with soberness."

I have no information as to whether this was Dr. Angell's full letter, nor have I any knowledge or guess as to how thoroughly he had studied Indian philosophy or how he would have re-acted to a question of the possible influence of Indian thought upon America if it were divorced from the issue of "converts".

Dr. John Henry Barrows, President, the World Parliament of Religions where Vivekânanda spoke, says in his addresses in India, according to the pamphlet: "The Christian people of America were hospitable to the delegates from other lands and faiths and heard and read with much interest and genuine sympathy the representations of non-Christian religions. This interest and courtesy were, in some cases misinterpreted. Some of the Japanese Buddhist delegates returned home with the idea, which they spread far and wide, that America was losing faith in Christianity and was hungering for the bread of life which Buddhism had to offer. Nothing could be more absurd. America is not losing faith in Christian religion. Its progress in the United States during the last twenty-five years has been more rapid than ever before."

Then Dr. Barrows quotes some statistics. He goes on: "People going to America from the Orient are easily liable to misunderstand the interest and courtesy with which they are received. Curious to hear all truth the American people listen eagerly to lectures on the Vedânta philosophy or on Esoteric Buddhism, and continue to go to their own churches, cherish their own Christian work as before. Naturally our Oriental visitors are most earnestly courted by American who for one reason or another are not in sympathy with evangelical Christian beliefs. And I have noticed that persons who have gone away from historic Christianity sometimes think that everybody is about to follow them. But this is not so. Our carefully prepared government census shows that the evangelical believers in America outnumber the non-evangelicals of all denominations more than one hundred to one."

Dr. Barrows is, according to the pamphlet, reported by the *Christian Patriot* (Feb. 27, 1897) to have said the following in course of his speech before the Madras Native Christian Association: "The non-Christian mind of India has been ludicrously inflated with pride because its representatives made a pleasant impression as advocates of Hinduism. Such pride on such poor foundations 'goeth before a fall'. But I hope the non-Christian friends here will permanently cherish the assurance that the Christian West is not blind to the elements of truth discoverable in non-Christian faiths. We recognize their hungerings for God, and we hope and pray for additional wisdom, the wisdom of sympathy, kindness and love, enabling us to show that Christ only is the Bread of Life which can satisfy those hungerings."

I do not know whether these were the exact words of Dr. Barrows. From what I have elsewhere read of his utterances the general tone is consistent. The printed pamphlet from which I have quoted is a personal gift of Dr. Angell to the Library of the University of Michigan.

The scholar and the missionary, whether or not either comes from the East or the West, may or may not place similar emphasis.

The scholar sometimes is and may talk like a missionary and vice versa. We should know which is talking at a particular time.

The work of the two Swâmis needs no justification or defence from me. It has its permanent worth. But we Indians are over-enthusiastic, our sense of lack in some things often over-compensates in the direction of exultation over foreign recognition. Let us not be childish, and given to exaggeration. Râmakrishna Mission, or Râmkrishna Vedânta Society is not based on exaggeration, no true mission is.

The dramatic phase of the Swâmis in America has been over long long ago, it is in the silent phase, the phase in which Vedânta is very slowly and unknowingly percolating into some corners of the best literature, poetry, philosophy and even the common mind of America that is important now. And yet if one should look through a cross-section of American literature today or look into educated minds, one would probably be unable to discover the Indian Vedânta. Nevertheless there may be discovered in them some "Veda" knowledge of truth of some important phases of life; there will be evidence of integrated thinking, devotion to justice, emphasis on the unity of Life, recognition of the unknown equation of being, insight into collective destiny and vision of common and yet superficially diversified humanity. Industrialized, machine-minded, organization-loving, matter-of-fact America is developing its own culture. It may not mind having hints from the Indian Vedânta but they must fit into its scheme of life and stand well on its indigenous foundation. Its science is making it broad and questioning, its science is also slowly making it non-material in its intellectual formulations.

Many of the old traditional beliefs of the church are weakening, but the Christian Church has not liquidated itself nor has entirely lost its formalistic hold. The silent revolution of the Christian Church is coming from within because of an impact from without.

In this revolution the spirit of Vedânta, the tolerance of Vedânta, the inclusiveness of Vedântic vision and the sacredness of the human soul and the sanctuary of the inner peace preached and instituted by Vedântists will be of collective help, but not exactly the Vedânta dressed in an Indian grab.

There are certain apparent intellectual difficulties that Vedânta raises. Some of them are pointed out by the writer of this book. Dr. Urquhart has done so in his book on Vedanta. Others have done likewise. If everything is illusion or *Mâyâ,* where is the incentive to active life, where is the place for a consuming hunger for moral endeavour?

Of course, Sankara explains that *Mâyâ* is not synonymous with nothingness, that *Aparâvidyâ* (empirical knowledge) is not the same as *Parâvidyâ* (pure knowledge), that action and morality though they are in the sphere of *Mâyâ* or *Aparâvidyâ,* are of supreme importance as a legitimate preparation before *Parâvidyâ* is reached. We shall not go into that discussion here. We are told that the Absolutism of Vedânta entails a great deal of intellectual, moral and spiritual preparation before its acceptance and realization are possible. To make Absolutism common currency in thinking is not easy. All teachers from Yâjñavalkya through Plato, Spinoza, Sankara, Emerson, to the modern Swâmis, run into difficulty when they speak. Some concepts can be carried to the man in the street but not all because much of true Vedânta, much of Absolutism, is beyond concepts, beyond words. Fortunately, whatever is not can nevertheless be of help, for that help let us bow our heads to those teachers. The concluding paragraph of Christy's book is: "(We have) realized and in finality restated the chief reason why Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott turned Eastward, a gesture which brought all the consequences we have studied. They could not live as in absentee God, and they were of Sankara's temper, Sankara the great sage of India who prayed that he might be forgiven for having frequented temples, since by doing so he had seemed to deny the omnipresence of God. All that the Concordians thought and did was consequent to this fact. We may be assured that when this is the temper of the best minds of the East and the West, the twain do meet in the sympathies of the mystic bond, which is universal."

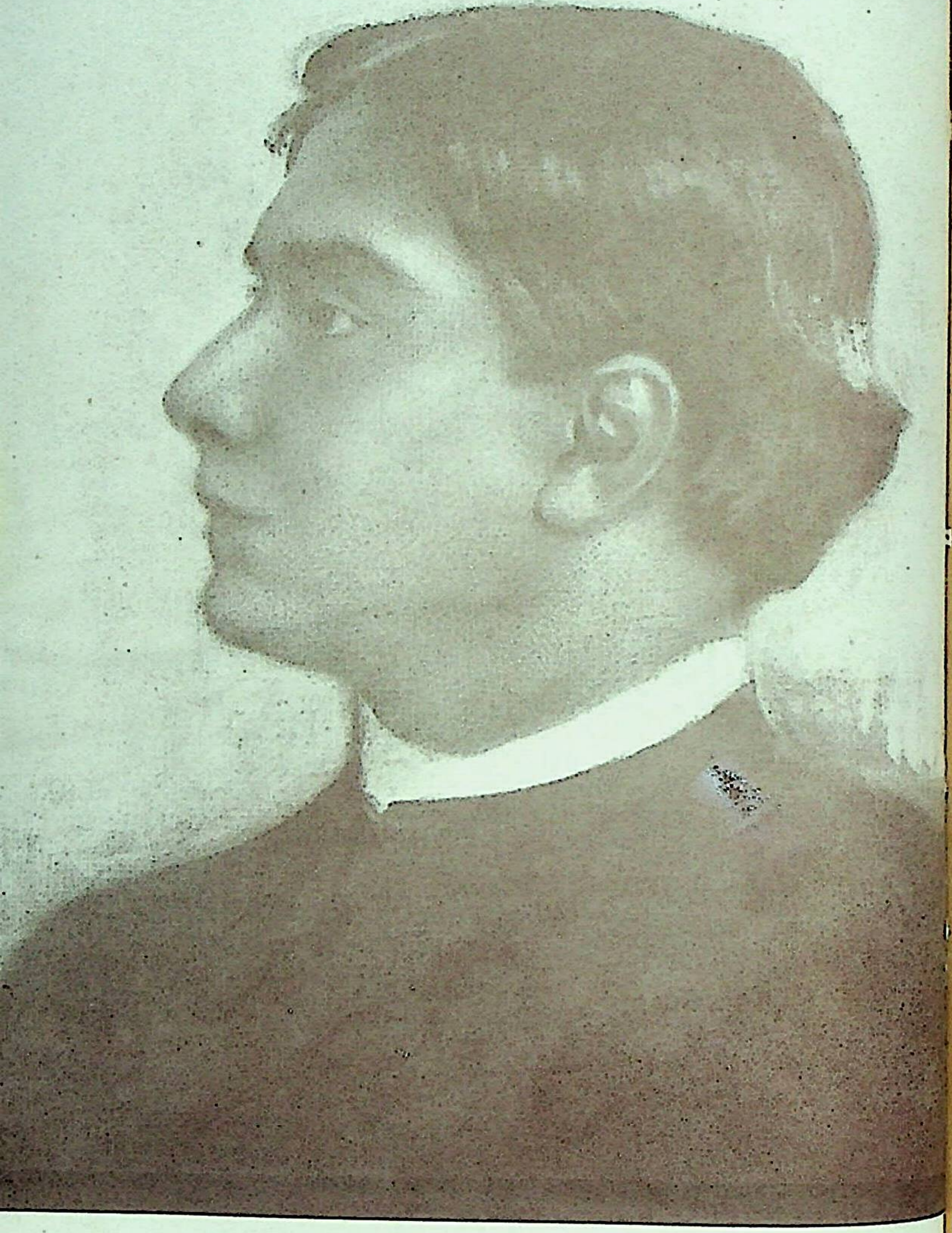
This book on Swâmi Abhedânanda by an American is another symbol of that same invisible bond. I am sure that Indian manhood and womanhood will be grateful to this noble soul who has lighted her torch from the light of India and who has poured her radiance into this self-appointed task so that her brothers and sisters in India could share the joy that has been hers to feel.

26, June 1945,
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan. U.S.A.

Basu Kumar Bagchi

PART I

"THE LAST OF THE GREAT ONES"



Drawn by Frank Dvorak of Prague

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAST OF THE GREAT ONES

[illegible] an expression of two points of view in [illegible], the personal or universal and the impersonal [illegible] formal and informal thought. Each civilization [illegible] depicts in its religious struggle the anthropomorphic [illegible] the background of an eternal abstraction. To [illegible] this conflict in man's mind system upon system [illegible] formulated from ancient through modern times. [illegible] psychology traces its ritual and its ceremonies [illegible] symbol, the thing signified; the hieroglyphic con- [illegible] the way to the meaning behind and within its script. Meaning is entered into by words as things are revealed [illegible] lamp * *. So making use of various forms and images [illegible] beings instruct my sons; but the summit of Reality can only be realized within oneself."[1]

In a recent work[2] by Sholem Asche, the Hebrew scholar and writer, the vision of St. Paul is interpreted as the spiritual re-enactment of a universal doctrine. The "ladder" of Jacob's dream thus becomes the ascent of man to his God. The ladder is the Messiahship by which the soul finds salvation, or union with the infinite Reality, through Yeshua of Galilee. In this sense the Resurrection, the Christ Idea, replaces the Indian system of reincarnation. The ladder of lives being the steps by which man attains his freedom in God, the Deity Eternal, and realizes through his true Self that there is no division between him and his universal Self or the one God. Realizes that he has since

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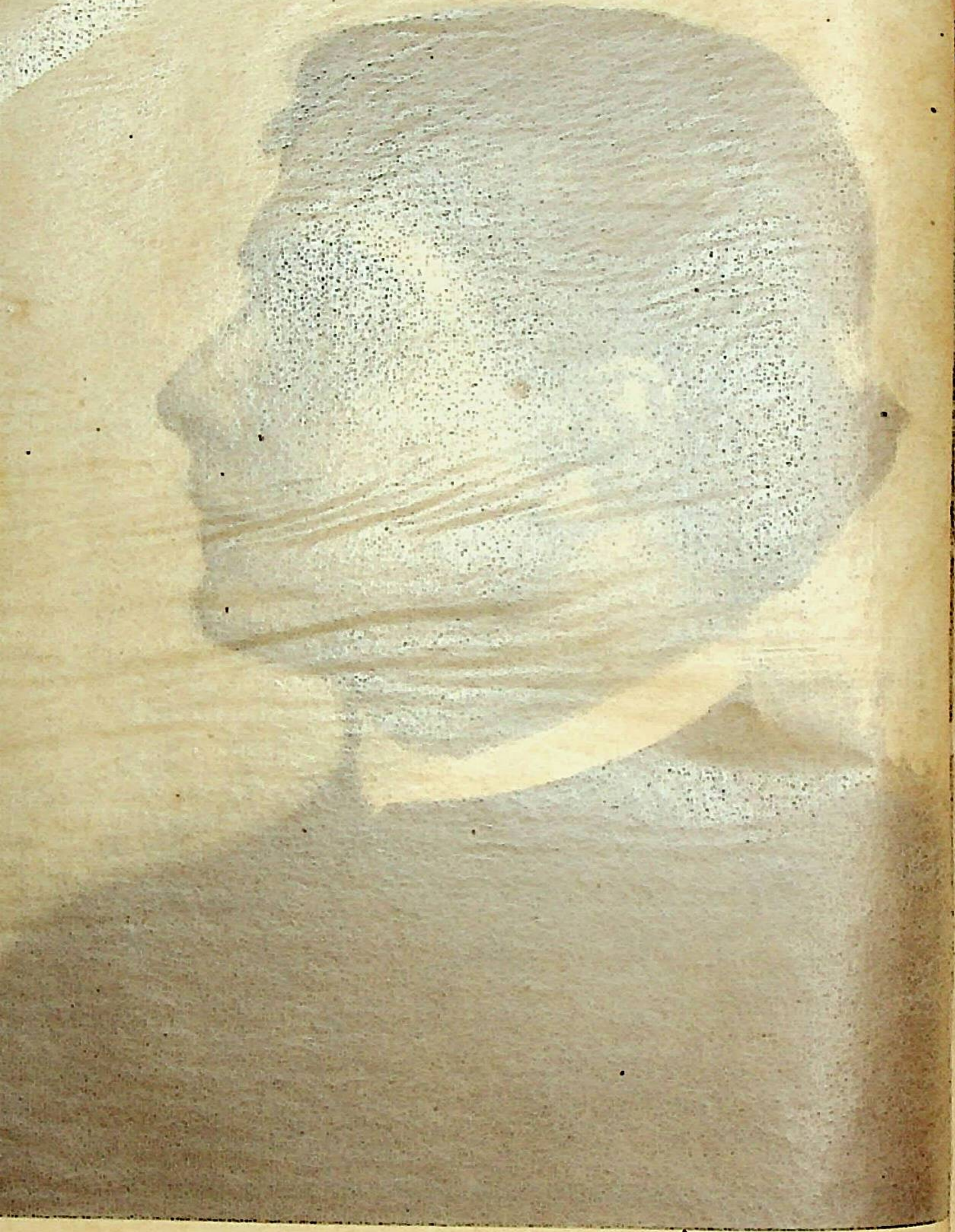
1. Buddha in the *Lankâvatâra-Sutra.*
2. The *Apostle* by Sholem Asche.



Drawn by Frank Dvorak of Prague

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAST OF THE GREAT ONES

Religion is an expression of two points of view in philosophy, the personal or universal and the impersonal or abstract; formal and informal thought. Each civilization re-enacts in its religious struggle the anthropomorphic idea upon the background of an eternal abstraction. To bridge this conflict in man's mind system upon system has been formulated from ancient through modern times. Religious psychology traces its ritual and its ceremonies to the symbol, the thing signified; the hieroglyphic conceals the way to the meaning behind and within its script. "Meaning is entered into by words as things are revealed by a lamp * *. So making use of various forms and images of things instruct my sons; but the summit of Reality can only be realized within oneself."[1]

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the beginning of time rested within his immortal mind, and his eternal Soul.

Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna, the modern Indian saint and mystic[3] whose spiritual logic confounded scholars both of West and East, gave to the West two of his chosen apostles to the spreading of Vedânta, that philosophy which is emprise and content of all thought. Srî Râmakrishna tested every known religious system. He submitted to ceremonials, rituals, analyses and worship that the modern world might have the tested experience—the synthesis of Indian reason and realization. Taught that man is the universal, the indivisible, who by life directional is ordained to attain, through reason, experience, work or worship—by one or all of these paths—to the one goal which is God. Call Him Christ, call Him Allah, Mohammed, Zoroaster or Râmakrishna, man himself becomes the Son of God. Man, whom Christ crucified came to ease through redemption and the cross, toward that formless abstract religion—arcana of patriarch, seer, and all men envisioned!

Abhedânanda's pronouncement of the eternal Vedânta was like unto a four-square tower of light and authority. To the worshiper he was the perfect *Bhakti;* to the worker he gave the soul of work; the mystic found the Divinity of experience and to the man of reason he was the grand Jñânin. Something composite, something firm and ever sweet governed all his acts and utterances. Something very close to the sublime shone through his measured living as doth the sunset glow enclose the setting day. Abhedânanda has been called by those who knew him well the most merciful and forgiving among men. It was not so much the quality of forgiveness that impressed me but rather that holiness which sees no sin, finds nothing to forgive. As in a clear crystal he saw through to causes and beyond, to a clarity that was the shining potential of every soul.

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[3] Believed by many to be the latest incarnation of God.

At the time of the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893 America was emerging from the after-math of a sectarian experimentation in religious philosophy. Scarce a premise or Biblical tenet that had not been singled out from Scripture and Gospel and some system formulated with a following and a congregation. The nineteenth century gave rise to the Millerites, the Oneida Community, Christian Science and Theosophy, to mention only a few. In later years came the Father Russellites, now called Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Father Divines until rackets in religion, to their shame, paralleled the industrial combines and big trust mergers which at the turn of the century gripped the political game, while mining camp and gold field made and unmade men's fortunes no less than the Moloch of Wall Street. The churches with their Fifth Avenue fashion and smart architecture went a long stride from the plain Meeting House of Quaker and Pilgrim, with less to give and more to exact during these days of dollar might. Materialism sadly menaced this blithe and light-hearted way of life that was America dancing through the "gay nineties." With it all there was a resurgent loneliness and sobriety replacing the bravado of the Liberal Movement and the fanaticism of the Puritan.

The orthodoxy of the churchman had run its hour. Men were returning to premise, disregarding doctrines, were demanding some new resilience; denying less, inisting more upon the tolerances. The New England theology having exhausted its own sterility, the spirit of man broke confines and overflowed into New York State which became the testing-ground for many an experiment in religion.

The early Liberal Movement starting with the appearance of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* found new life and an added zest under the able crusade of Robert

Ingersoll; this together with the emphasis of the intelligentsia through the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman helped to break mental solidities, and reason penetrated every last fastness of religious idolatry and superstition, witchcraft and perdition-preaching. This emancipation was non-sectional; East and West, North and South it spread new thinking. The destiny of thought was in the saddle—Man was on his own.

As the Liberal Movement spread in like ratio did sectarianism return the mind piecemeal to a searching review of old doctrines and a severe testing of all Biblical tenet. Congregations formed around new leaders and under strange banners. Beneath and within this conflict could be recognized in the Movements of these men and women a pitiful and haggard sincerity—earnest counter to the too-free thought and the liberal stream of truth-seeking fostered by iconoclast, reformer and innovator. The age-old hunger of the spirit was researching scripture, reseeking old mores for the scant crumbs dropped between punitive doctrine, dogma and theology. Gradually there was felt an awareness, a need of the heart for spiritual sources. Beneath and within this welter of sectarianism arose the optimism of a promise with less of the preachment of "consequences." Spiritualism declared immortality proved and concrete. Christian Science paid dividends in the hope of mind over matter. The Millerites, the Jemimakins and the Shakers taught less of man born in sin and more of his moral resistance. The Perfectionists declared realization of heaven on earth here and now, their doctrine supported with words from St. Paul. Man was again relinquishing his own seeking, hoping through fellowship and contact to find realignment and affinity with the Unknown.

It was into this innocence, into this starved fervency of the 1890's with its dreams of strange crusades and empiricism in religious philosophy, its stark and honest quest towards the liberal sciences, that India sent Vivekânanda who at the World Parliament of Religions dropped that golden tenet charged with universal magic "Unity in Variety"—the way to the goal, the one God Universal. Thus came the message of Vedânta to America and a sanity restored.

Some have likened this *Sannyâsin* from the banks of the Ganges—this Vivekânanda, as to a meteor flashing across the national consciousness leaving an indelible eternal imprint upon the mind of Western man. None who heard and none who met the Swâmi have ever forgotten, though few now live who had that honour. But he did more for America than announce this grand hope, more than leave upon the heart the flash of insight and of tenure. He gave to America in Abhedânanda who was as much an Apostle to the West as ever was St. Paul to the Gentiles. These two names Vivekânanda and Abhedânanda (*Viveka*—knowledge, *Ananda*—Bliss, and *Abheda*—inseparable, *Ananda*—Bliss)[1] are names as inseparable as is the confluence of a stream, as are the reverse sides of a single coin.

Abhedânanda moulded the religious opinion, gave America a new directional in its search for truth, that search upon which as a nation she had spent her energies and her power through the polemics of an antagonized freedom. A national mind earnest and without bread, whose reason lacked intuition, the over-heart staggering for an issue. Vivekânanda left Abhedânanda in New York City and upon this young monk's shoulders fell the mantle of a high apostleship—the positioning of that illumined flash!

No metropolis, not London excepted, had during these years so hardheaded an intellectual and orthodox intelligentsia. The men and women who flocked to his discourses, attended his lectures, or the more intimate class instruction, came often with posed questions and with problems beyond the acumen of academic savants or of the Church Doctorate to elucidate or dispel. Possibly it was the Swâmi's thorough mastery of Sanskrit grammar, acquired in the days of his boyhood when he had addressed himself so indefatigably to studies beyond his years, spending his nights studying the principles of the Sanskrit language and grammar after regular hours of class studies. Possibly too, it was this early self-discipline which formulated his *will to know* and lent acumen to logic and reason.

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[1] The word Vivekânanda denotes 'Bliss in discrimination', and Abhedânanda signifies 'He who has realized Bliss in Unique Unity of *Brahman*.'

Sanskrit is only spoken by the *pundits* and savants in India. Hindustâni, Bengali, Tamil and other languages are the common speech of the people. However, know it is that he quietened all antagonists with that keen memory and that forensic ability which never failed whatever the issue. There is something in the Sanskrit language that is source to the Vedas and the Hindu Scriptures, some continuity between thought-sequence and articulation which reveals the mystic meaning of inclusion—subject and object self-contained. Thus the AUM—sacred syllable of Hindu trinity—content as well of the formless and cosmic destiny of man. There are scholars who are versed in these high and sacred eruditions, these realities. I mean not to enter fields beyond my ken. My desire is but to sketch cursorily *as it appears to me,* the general standing of America's religious and philosophical thinking at the turn of the century and America's reaction to that first impact of Indian philosophy upon the West, as it intrigued my interest and observation and led me to study, within the horizons of my living, these transfusions and inheritances of the Aryan race.

It has been said in a recently published biography of Henry Ward Beecher that the kaleidoscopic changes in the preachments of America's foremost preacher of the Gospels that Dr. Beecher's fervent and colourful sermons recorded the fluctuations and were accurate indication of the popular pulse. Be that as it may, Henry Ward Beecher was indeed what in other professions is termed the opportunist and these opportunists more than perhaps any other agency seem to reflect and record the needs, the hopes and whatever of stability there is in the average mind. This the America that received an Abhedânanda, the young and gentle scholar from India —this *Sannyâsin* monk from the quiet of the Himâlayas, and whose shy modesty concealed a man of adamant and inflexible purpose, and high ideals. A man to whom the West was a constant and bewildering enigma. A West whose thinking was tangle of emotion and a clamour for rights driven by its suppressed and hidden hunger for religion. For some tested reality for which it felt the need yet of which it knew nothing.

The new intellectual freedom gained by the divorcement from old rituals, doctrines and all postings of faith and belief, tottered before this 'age of reason', this age of empirical sectarianism and found no inner sustenance, no reliance on the spirit. Pioneer life had passed; old endeavours that formerly had absorbed the drives and acumen through right effort were returning man to himself; culture and learning had relinquished all religious claims. Fashion's edict was: "Ask no man of his religion." The word was barred from polite society. Learning had turned toward science and away from philosophy. Reasearch and the liberal arts were lending their glamour and their appeal; psychology was a new word on the popular tongue bruited and misapplied. The Society for Psychical Research was reference and conclusion to all extra-sensory perception. Only what could be proved and pinioned to tested and common occurrence found countenance. The reprint which follows, taken from the columns of *Prabuddha Bhârata*, May 1901, adds colour and authority of an outstanding American critic:

> "Mr. Goldwin Smith closes the century for the *Contemporary* with essaying a bold task—nothing less

> than a general survey of the whole field of the science of religion, from its origins up to Christianity; and all, pronounced untenable with perhaps a savings clause for the faith of Zoroaster. Rome in her latest dogmas has openly broken with reason. Criticism has destroyed the infallible book on which Protestantism was based. Even the evidence for theism is destroyed. 'Science has substituted evolution for creation, evolution of such a sort as seems to shake our belief in a creator and directing mind.' Philosophy shows a first cause unthinkable. Scepticism is rife in all classes: atheism is making way among the quick-witted artisans in all countries. * * The tendency of all thought is towards the belief in 'a universe without guidance or plan, the relation of man to which can never be known.' He concludes by insisting that 'our salvation lies in the single-minded pursuit of the truth. Man will not rest in blank agnosticism: He is irresistibly impelled to inquire into his origin and destiny'."—*Review of Reviews.*

Some forty years passed before these new directionals were incorporated and made official:

> January 13, 1938.
>
> A Commission of the Church of England reported that the creation narrative in Genesis is mythological, with a symbolic rather than a historic value.—*World Almanac*, 1943.

CHAPTER TWO

And Abhedânanda came to Gotham where he wrestled with the doctors, the savants, the literati, and the intelligentsia. The lecture demands gradually expanded from the parlours and the homes of the devoted few to the larger halls of the city. A growing recognition called the young Abhedânanda before church societies and university audiences. What hath this man that we have not? They were soon to learn as the message of Vedânta taught men to 'think through' from the finite to the Infinite, taught man to turn toward those inner realities, away from phenomena towards the Noumena and there to find his content and his experience. "Those who know Reality belong to a Race apart, the Race that never dies, and neither they nor those who seek to be born into that Race concern themselves with sects or schools."[1]

Julien Benda in his work entitled *'Treason of the Intellectuals'*[2] truly states the social and moral when he writes: "* * the modern 'clerks' teach man that his desires are moral insofar as they tend to secure his existence at the expense of an environment which disputes it. In particular they teach him that his species is sacred insofar as it is able to assert its existence at the expense of the surrounding world."[3] It was against this amoral fervour the Swâmi gave to America his *Doctrine of Karma* with axial and aphoristic tenets. "To work thou hast the

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1. Srî Krishna Prem in the *Yoga of the Bhagavad Gitâ* quoting Hermes Trismegistus.
2. From *Treason of the Intellectuals* by Julien Benda, Translated by Richard Aldington, p. 126. Copyright 1928 by William Morrow & Co., by permission of William Morrow.
3. That is why Pragmatism is also called Humanism. (See F. Schiller: *Protagoras or Plato*). Vide Addenda.

right but not to the fruits thereof", and he established his disciples into a transcendental pattern by which the multitudes could comprehend, if not witness, an abstraction. Principled living finds security only in principles.

Thus came the Swâmi with his apostleship of Monism direct from the feet of the Master and his novitiate in India where he was *chelâ* to the great Guru whom he served with his every act and word and thought, himself dedicated to the spirit of the living and eternal presence of the Infinite.

Empowered from on High Abhedânanda spoke and taught as a man envisioned. He spoke with authority; in slow and measured words he drove home his meaning with a matchless conviction and coherence. One recognized the inevitability of the law, the promise of the spirit. No man abused save through and from his own self-abasement in action or in thought. No mind oppressed save by its own inertia, its own refusal to save itself. No punishment, no penance that was not self-inflicted. In stirring, searching logic he handed man back his problems, the terror drawn, gave him tools for right thinking, directing him to right action and right fervour. He turned the mind to causes, taught that unsatisfactory effects were of wrong premise. Taught that the only escape was through search, constant and unceasing search for the true Self. Thus one learned to attack life and thought from within. Not man's brother that had sinned against him but man himself had brought the misery he had suffered and endured.

At one period of Swâmi Abhedânanda's teaching and ministry he pressed home relentlessly the doctrines of reincarnation and *Karma*. Making of them almost a Yoga to replace the exercises he was withdrawing. Often and often he would repeat from the platform: "None can escape the inevitability of the law." America must learn to accept her spiritual responsibility if she would be the charioteer. None can drive the senses (those horses of the chariot) save he learns discrimination. The Seer, the Self within rides free. The mind must align itself with principle, orient and co-ordinate, weigh the eternal values. The venues of men's laws are the economies of morality and ethics, beyond that they save no mind, bring no restoration. The secret of work has no "eye to profits". Work for work's sake alone; worship without hope of fear of salvation, and reason premised on the universal. Thus Vedânta came to America. Thus the Apostle taught.

The Swâmi left with all who knew him, with all who came under the spell of his spiritual reason, his wisdom and his sanity, and that one axiom of grandeur in thinking, basic rudder to the mind, 'unity in variety', the eternal Monistic Vedânta. He acknowledged early in the years of his ministry that the *Dharma* of the West was work—and not the *Sannyâsin* path as accepted and practised in India. He advised, and returned many of the devotees of this new gospel to that ancient government of the Four Ashramas as established by the Vedic King fathers in the Forest Schools of the *Rishis*. These four Ashramas into which the span of human life falls naturally, are: one,—the years of infancy with the parents; two,—adolescence spent with the spiritual teacher or guide; three,—mature life offered as a sacrificial dedication to family and country; and four,—the evening of life given to study and introspection, retirement from all involved activities. To attain to this end the Swâmi constantly emphasized that axiom which is stability in thinking, 'Unity in Variety' through work or worship, reason and experience. He came not to shatter or destroy. His method of teaching was to steady and to make strong the potential of each individual's mental and spiritual aptitudes through a balanced and a directed disposition of thought and life. It was tedious, it was slow; it was without glamour, without fanfare—this Vedânta after the manner of his teaching. He made no converts, he exacted no pledges, taught no theology. By his life he proclaimed continence of thinking, that single vision of the inward study. Again and again I have heard him in discourse, class and lecture make the statement:

"If you are not a better Christian, a better Jew, a better Protestant or Catholic,—Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Methodist, for coming here, *then*—I say—Vedânta is *not* for you." These words made the grand challenge to sectarianism which must give way before the sturdy Reality, for as all movements are gathered in that last crescendo and final "Alleluia, He hath broken every chain, Alleluia" so into an all-embracing love men and women looked into each other's hearts and found life good.

The Swâmi was gifted with a deep and resonant voice—mellow, rich and inclusive. His very tones were of encouragement and appeal. He was the most ordinate yet powerful speaker I have ever heard. The sentence quoted above in Swâmi's words I have punctuated after the manner of his emphasis and tone structure. In the States we have had many public speakers. Some of them world-renowned; of these it has been my privilege to hear two, the Hon. Williams Jennings Bryan called the 'silver tongued orator' who moved the multitudes, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 'the man with the golden voice'. The texture of Swâmi's voice was different from the voices of these great speakers. Some quality in the composition of tone one could not place; it commanded, never implored nor besought. He could be heard at the end of the largest hall yet he never raised his voice. But a conviction bore home to its purposed need as doth the chords of an organ prelude, include and dominate all radii of a cathedral close. It is difficult to describe to those who never heard the Swâmi speak. Perhaps it originated from the hidden union between spoken word and idea, perhaps more the gift of a Titanic Goodness entrusted to him from the ages for mankind. Perhaps again, this was why he never spoke idly or give countenance to follies in another's speech. I believe could one have come within the radiance of that voice yet hear not the syllables or spoken words—only the sound, one still could not escape some restoration from world turbulence and unhappiness, for this voice linked to spiritual declaration was AUM—long pronounced.

The Swâmi rarely gestured—always master of himself, he used none of those histrionic effects so often practised by the best of speakers. The flow of that majestic thought held the listeners as in a trance by its clarity. I have heard him address an audience sometimes for an hour and a half during which time he never hesitated for a word, never repeated. He spoke without notes or script as though impelled by the Light of some dynamic power. He lectured as one endowed with a mind illumined. His logic convinced. There was nothing to refute. His learning amazed one by its purity, his faith was of knowledge. He knew and lived the Law. One left the hall, the temple, or Ashrama at peace, ancient thirsts quenched, living quickened. This the man Vivekânanda called to America to carry on the work he could not himself undertake for lack of time and the increasing demands made upon his overtaxed energies.

The story of Swâmi's early life and education in India leaves much to speculation. He speaks of self-education, of his studies in philosophy which were undoubtedly begun at a very early age since he was only eighteen at the time of his "entrance examination from the Oriental Seminary". He served Srî Râmakrishna for two years and a half (1883-1886) and after the "departure" of the Master in August 1886 began as *Sannyâsin* his wanderings for ten years over India. The years of his boyhood are best mentioned and as cursorily dismissed in that all too brief autobiographical sketch of his life which appeared over his signature in the press of Calcutta. An account condensed and succinct cataloguing the events of his life, he goes on to say that the reader may have "some idea of the different influences which moulded his convictions".

Reconstructing from this autobiographical sketch, together with several episodes from his life, of which he told me personally, about his days with Srî Râmakrishna, and added to what I myself know of the Swâmi down the years I will endeavour to fill in some details that the portrait of this young lad may glimpse the forming man. I do not know India. I have never been there. I have known very few Hindus well and those few I have learned to know and love, have been aliens in our land without the fair appraisal which native environment and background give. Whatever is wanting in perspective, description or delineation is therefore the fault of the author and for which lack of imagination my due apology.

Literature and scriptures, philosophy, if you will, are the patterns that the Western mind weaves in imagination, speculation and poetry when it thinks in general terms of India—land of mystery, land of romance, land of *Rishis,* sages and Seers. But in the personal and individual reaction to a people mental approaches are of blood stream and language.

The Swâmi was born in Calcutta,[1] a cosmopolitan metropolis antedating our leading cites of the West. He was born but a stone's throw from where the birth of a world-shaking Idea gave form to the Paramahansa on the banks of India's sacred river, the Ganges. He was one of a group of Universals born to a destined message and purpose. He was born under the shadow of the Oriental Seminary, son of Professor Rasick Lâl Chandra, the man who held the chair in English there for twenty-five years, the man who owned his private library and who was professed and learned in philosophy.

The Swâmi must have spoken English from his early boyhood since he speaks of studying Sanskrit which was his second language and Sanskrit grammar. He was as youth and child a dominant health-minded normal lad for ever pestering with his "whys" and "hows", as persistent, I take it, as our modern lads, when stressed with the godly *will to know*. When repulsed by his father who discovers him reading a copy of the *Bhagavad Gitâ* extracted from the "governor's" private library and admonishes him: "That is not for boys, it will make you more insane" the lad's instant reaction and which as a man of years, the Swâmi records with satisfaction: "But his remarks could not stop me from reading it".

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[1] Swâmi Abhedânanda was born on Tuesday the 2nd October, 1866.

The father's words make you more insane is evidence of long suffering with the lad's insistent "hows" and "whys" of all events.

This intrigue with the *Gitâ,* his discovery of the book in his father's 'private library' and the warning and admonishment of Professor Chandra to his son made perhaps the earliest imprint on that lad's intent toward "speculation" and the "study of pure thought". For, when he reads in Wilson's *History of the Philosopher, Sankarâcârya,* and has that overwhelming connection that it is above all else his wish to become a 'philosopher', is it not, this decision, the reappearance of the *Gitâ* "impact" upon his boyish mind? So strong the realization of his awakening aptitudes "he gave up" at once the study of art—"painting from nature" for which he had enrolled at the Seminary and definitely enters upon the formal study of philosophy. He does not ask; "he gave up"—making his own decision,—lad of independent self-education.

One can imagine the consternation this resolve produced upon Professor Rasick Lâl Chandra when the lad announces this to the family. This indomitable son who *wills* to be a man of thought. The philosopher in a land of philosophers so renowned as to give pause to elders let alone a lad in his '-teens, and inspired by no less a name than that of Sankarâcârya. He won his hurdles over the *Gitâ* and he won the decision to change his course at the Seminary. He was to become proficient in the Sanskrit language so much so that he could take up the independent study of *Moogdhabodha* (Sanskrit grammar) and become sufficiently proficient in that language to "compose verse in it."

The "whys" and the "hows" of a lad are not to be taken lightly. Born with the *'will to know'* it could be said of the Swâmi that he had been educated in infancy. Read, sometime, the record of his autobiography as it appeared in copies of the Indian press in Calcutta. I have since seen a reproduction in the work entitled *Contemporary Indian Philosophy,* a compilation by the editors Dr. Muirhead and Dr. S. Râdhâkrishnan from the Library of Philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

The Swâmi attended all schools of thought, followed all the outstanding and noteworthy Lecture Seminars, studied the Christian and anti-Christian systems based on the higher criticism of the Bible and Free Thought. He heard the great leaders of the Brâhmo Samâj; the Yogis of his day and the *pundits*. In science as in philosophy none escaped his scathing search. This independent study of comparative religion and philosophy self-imposed drove his intellectual energies into intensified disciplines in reason and in character. He writes of hearing such Christian missionaries as "the Rev. Dr. Macdonald, the Rev. Kâli Charan Banerjee and others". Speaks, too, of attendance upon the noted Hindu philosopher Pundit Sasadhar Tarkachudâmani * * on the six systems of Hindu Philosophy" in Albert Hall, the presidency of which at that time was held by Bakim Chandra Chatterjee, the great scholar and writer'. These were followed by a series of lectures on *'Vaisesika* and *Sâmkhya'* philosophies in which the Punditji explained the atomic theory of Kanâda and the evolution theory of Kapila, and compared them with those of the ancient Greek philosophers as well as the analysis of modern theory of evolution. This he goes on to tell us roused his interest in Western philosophies of ancient and modern Europe.

But when the Punditji lectured on the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali his interest turned to the serious study of Hindu psychology and the 'practical methods of the Yoga System'. It was under the "direction of the great philosopher, the late Kâlivara Vedântavâgish, who was at that time translating the Yoga Sutras and making an elaborate commentary on them in Bengali that he studied before turning to the analysis of his own mind "to gain self-control and to enter *Nirvikalpa Samâdhi* through the practice of Hatha Yoga and Râja Yoga". This he followed with studies in *Siva-Samhitâ,* a treatise on practical methods of Râja Yoga. At this time he was advised not to practise any of the methods in the Yoga Sâstras without a competent teacher and preceptor (*Guru*).

To the lad's determined quest this admonition gave sharp pause while the need for a teacher, a sympathetic and understanding guide becomes an "anxiety." The dauntless spirit to know, the long search and study is experience baffling and confusing to a mind so sensitive and ardent. Remember, he is still a lad in his—teems and one whose high tensions were all intellectual abstractions directed solely by his *will to know.* Indeed had the good father been concerned earliest lest his son should become "more insane", what of now and this son's "why" and "how" that had become the "who" and "where" of his quest?

A class-fellow, the Swâmi records, by name Jajñesvar Bhattâchârya, tells him of Râmakrishna Paramahansa living at Dakshineswar five miles above Calcutta, a small suburban town on the Ganges river. It is not Calcutta, the great metropolis of his familiars, seat of learning where cosmopolite and scholar meet in seminar and academy. Evidently Abhedânanda did not act at once upon his class-fellow's instructions, for he records "one Sunday morning", not next day—nor next Sunday—which would naturally be his first free day from classes and lectures but calmly records "one Sunday morning" he "reached the Temple Garden where he met the great Yogî Râmakrishna Paramahansa." Why the delay, the interval? Did prescience take some guiding hand, bid him wait knowing too well this would be the dynamic cross-roads, the point of departure toward which all the years of childhood and youth had insisted their novitiate?

In America the naturalist and poet, John Burroughs, writes these beautiful lines:

"I make delays—I stay my haste
For what avail that eager pace—."

And our hero pauses—.

For what avail the eager pace, and in the measure of this pause lies the Swâmi's majesty and for ever after the measured living. He makes delays—he approaches the Great Mahâtmâ in continence and modesty. "Can you teach me?" questioning his own inadequacies, his own lack of preparation, this lad self-educated in those abstractions which constitute to this day the history of philosophy in three Continents.

With what modesty these few cryptic sentences record the anxieties, the long preparation and now the Hour of Destiny—the fulfilment of his mission.

"I met the Great Yogî, asked him if he could teach me the practical methods of Yoga philosophy." The Swâmi makes no mention of that meeting beyond these few brief sentences terse in their shyness, and yet in honesty he must record what Râmakrishna said: "Yes." He could help and "after reading my past life" the Master's words: "You were a great Yogî in your past incarnation." We who wondered at the Swâmi's proclivities for learning, we who knew of the declined seat in a great Western University, we who later were to witness the life of this man in its utter simplicity, its shy sweetness and self-immolation when world awards were calling wonder no longer that fame and honour however illustrious wakened no echoes in the grandeur of a character born of long hierarchies.

"You were a great Yogî in your past incarnation!" "The experience of the Soul is of eternal worth" the Swâmi himself declares in his paper refuting the errors of Mr. Horatio Dresser's "Interpretation of Vedânta and the Inscrutable Law of Mâyâ.[1] No experience is lost. "A great Yogî," and I have heard the Swâmi's divert aggressive challenge to his powers in crowded public halls and turn men's minds to sobriety and truth almost ere one realized there had been a contretemps.

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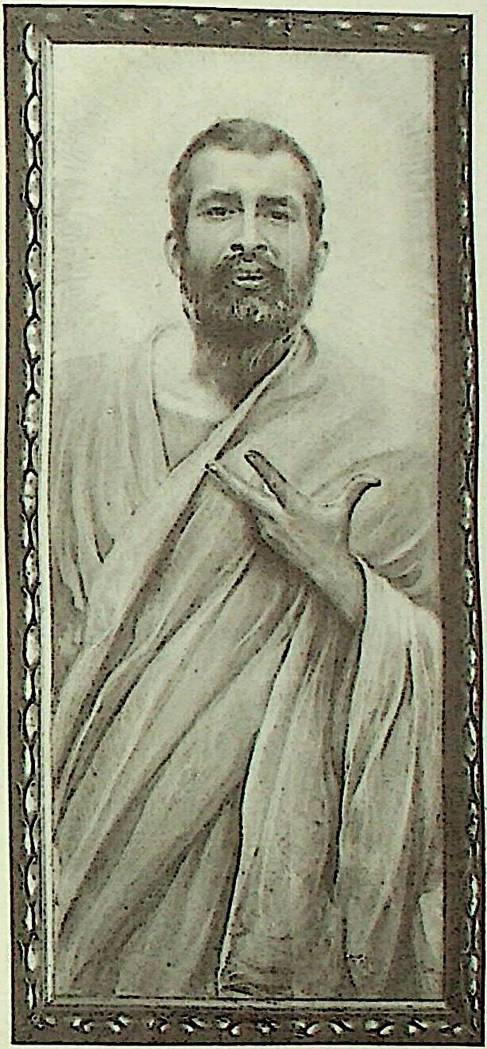
[1] The papers in this discussion are given full in the Addenda to this work.

"Come, my boy!" The Master calls. "Come, my boy!" How the magic of those three words must have opened gates to the lad's bewildered suffering—sesame and release. "Come," and come he did into the Master's grace. It has been written that Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna made no formal disciples. That would mean after the manner of religious schools. But he certainly remade character into high potentials. Made disciples, *chelâs* and resolved young candidates into apostles of the eternal and immortal Truth, ordained men in wisdom and in vision.

"Come, my boy!" What other *mantra,* what other challenge needed this young aspirant to knowledge, this mind prefervid with study and search?

Long years later the Swâmi told me of this visit to the Master, of his capitulation "heart and mind and soul" to the Light of the Master's touch and the spell that swept him within its spiritual magic lasted his life-time. "I could not rest outside that Presence. I was bound to return. The world had lost its incentive and its hold. Freedom to me was in the Garden of the Temple at Dakshineshwar where dwelt the Holy One." That "Garden" which Abhedânanda was to carry henceforth wherever his mission led, carry also the spiritual radiance and that winged power of his Master's call: "Come, my boy!" And the Swâmi made disciples in Râmakrishna's name. Enlightened men and women to tread the trail he blazed through materialism, superstition and hardened love of holdings. So spread he the Temple Garden of Dakshineshwar across the lands that novitiate and enquirer alike learned within that vision rectitude in act and thought and feeling. O Gracious Master! O Great



SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The reproduction of the original portrait by F. Dvorak, enshrined in the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

The Holy Mother

The reproduction of the original portrait by F. Dvorak, enshrined in the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

Teacher of expositioned Eternal Good, who so mingled man and master—Râmakrishna and Abhedânanda—that the humblest disciple among us found refuge in that grand *Guruship,* humanity's over-lord; wherever dwells Universal thought or selfless love there the ecohoes whisper: "Come, my boy!"

"I will teach you how to practise Yoga." The lad's long quest was over. From theory and the grand abstractions to the hour of testing! To applied psychology the lad gave all he had formerly given of himself in Academy and Hall. Of those *Sâdhanâs* I never heard the Swâmi speak. They are disciplines requiring long preparation and must be of *Dharma*—one to them born. They are not acquired by book or rote. The great preceptors hesitate to give them even in India. They direct the pupil, however erudite, to a man of realization. Such was Bhagavân Srî Râmakrihna Paramahasa!

"Then he initiated me and gave me instructions in concentration and meditation"—this the lad who had attempted in his fervent quest to "analyze his own mind". Now we feel the sense of watchful care he was to have. "He touched my chest and aroused my *Kundalinî,* the 'Serpent Power', at the base of my spinal column". Note, how the Master found this lad ready for realization and upon his first visit. Note also how that response to the Master's Call came swift and sure, then followed the reading, the instructions, and so quick and alive the mind He gives the "touch". "He touched my chest and aroused my *Kundalinî*". That "touch" of the Holy One for which kings would renounce their thrones and learned men yield their trappings and their tomes. Abhedânanda simple, earnest youth of high endeavour, pure and holy fervour; learned beyond his years—youth with the weapon "not this, not this" pierced system upon system of reason, doctrine and ethics to become face to face with the Ultimate—that bastion no mind can comprehend. Now the Master takes over "gives the touch", "and I went into *Samâdhi,* the state of superconsciousness". Little wonder the boy found Calcutta Life impossible on his return to home and studies. He told me that he "suffered"—wanted "only to be in the presence of the Holy One". Life had lost its savour to new directionals. He desired but to realize the quick and the meaning of Truth. Reason without spirit could no longer inspire or serve. His parents were beside themselves, expostulated in vain. Their son was well-born, of high caste, and of a family line of learning and repute. Of what avail to let him become wander and *chelâ* to another Indian Yogî, join the vast caravan of spiritual monks with which India was overrun. No, no countenance would they give. Nor would Râmakrishna receive the boy as *chelâ* without the parents' consent. "I ran away I suffered so", he told me. "But Râmakrishna sent me back, would have none of my coming unless my parents gave consent." These hours and days of struggle were poignant. He told me of them in the prime of manhood when the "Master was no more" and he, Abhedânanda, was in a field of ministry far from home and native land, let us share with him in restrospect, a little of those hours of darkness.

Every good son hesitates to cross his parents' wishes, those parents who have reared their children in rectitude and benevolence. But Abhedânanda ran away from home and came again to the Master who was culmination of all his dreams: "In him I found the Embodiment of the Absolute Truth of the highest philosophy as well as of the Universal Religion which underlies all sectarian religions of the world, and became his humble disciple."

What can custom and the social order demand of one so ordained to follow that call "Come, my boy", and I will give thee peace. Returned to his home again in obedience to his Master's behest, he becomes ill, sick with longing and heartbreak. Father and mother capitulate and the lad returns to Dakshineshwar to take residence where he had the good fortune to be with the Master and to serve Him for more than two years. O bliss! O young man of hope and destiny to dwell within the Garden and to "serve" as *chelâ* in that Spiritual Race of Universals!

The Swâmi's record continues:

"There I met his other disciples, among whom Swâmi Vivekânanda was the most brilliant; I was attracted to him and became his close companion. Frequently, I used to discuss with him various abstruse points of Epistemology, Ontology and Metaphysics of India and of Europe."

Thus began the epic outline and the Pattern. Youth met youth, two lads of single purpose, two lads elected of the Ages to become missioners to men of thought the wide world over, one to blaze the Way of Spirit, "the Race that never dies", and the other, this Abhedânanda, to establish the law, the order, Truth's orientation to every quest, every religious system.

With Vivekânanda: "I used to discuss with him various abstruse points". Tenet and precept and doctrine these lads tore apart, examined the ideologies of all history and philosophy, measuring the worth of each against the metaphysics of India and the *Dvaita*, dualistic philosophy which Râmakrishna taught as the first step which "leads to the *Visista-Advaita* philosophy of Râmânuja in search after the Ultimate Truth of the Universal which is One and the Absolute (*Brahman*)"; taught them "that the search after Truth ends in the realization of the oneness of the Jîva (individual soul), Jagat (world), and Isvara (God) in *Brahman* as taught in Advaita philosophy of Vedânta; and that they are different steps in the path of the realization of the absolute Truth or *Brahman*".

Abhedânanda was at this time devoting himself to "self-education in physics, astronomy, logic and religion. Spencer's *First Principles* and *Psychology*, Hamilton's

Philosophy and Lewes' *History of Philosophy;* attended courses of lectures at the Science Association * * and with Vivekânanda (pursued) the Buddhistic philosophy and the principles of Advaita or non-dualistic philosophy of Vedânta."

CHAPTER FOUR

One evening near the close of Râmakrishna's life, when the *gurubhâis* were taking turns sitting up nights with the Master, it became Abhedânanda's turn. The Swâmi told me: "I was reading as always was my custom, and lying full length upon the floor beside Râmakrishna's bed. The light was shaded from his eyes, and thinking him asleep I was lost in my book. Presently he spoke: "What are you reading, my boy?" I showed him the book telling him it was Lewes' *History of Philosophy*. The Master chuckled, and said: "Always the book."

Thus the Swâmi wove the fabric of his later strength, informed and adamant against all assailants of school and mart that were to cross the perimeter of that Mission. Two other incidents before we leave the Garden of the Master where he had "the good fortune to serve for two years."

At one time the lads were playing ball in the enclosed courtyard. "Our ball went over the high fence into a neighbour's yard. This man was not friendly to us and would not give us back the ball. I said: "He ought to be dead". Sometime later on one of the returns from my wanderings, the *gurubhâis* gathered around me rather awed and solemn, "you must be careful, you have too much power, the man is dead", and recalled to me I had said: the man should be dead." The Swâmi chuckled when he told me this.

The Master required of all his *Sannyâsin* disciples once at least they take begging bowl and travel barefoot the Indian way. Well he knew the temper of these high-caste lads, well he knew the clinging mists with which vain glory defeats the austerity of mind and mores. Abhedânanda and Vivekânanda alike intellectuals both appeared before their parents' homes as wanderers and by this act were signed and sealed for ever to India's Spirit Way.

You, dear reader—you who are parents and mothers, East or West—your first-born, your high born young son appears before your portholed door. (In India there is a shelf before a portholed door in the houses of the upper classes where offerings are made for holy mendicants, or otherwise). You hear the summons or see him appear, raimented in the robe of his kind; in silent gesture he extends his bowl. No word, no cry. Swiftly the mother veils her eyes lest by some tremour she convey one pang to that Soul enduring pride, nostalgia or deep emotion. This their young novitiate, this their earliest subjugation of sense of home and caste and lineage requested by the Master. Henceforth ties are one, not many.

Another incident the Swâmi told me: "I was with one of the brothers in the City. I wanted experience. I had never eaten meat, we entered a restaurant and I ordered and ate of it. Râmakrishna always knew when something weighed upon our minds. 'Well, my boy, and what is it?' I told him. I always told him the truth, but this time I was afraid. Since he asked he had to know yet I expected he would surely slap me in the face, but Râmakrishna laughed and said: 'Well, now you have experience, my boy, and how do you like it?' I didn't like it and I told him."

No concern too small for the Master to weave into the contexture of his Spiritual House. These boys, *chelâs* all, were to take their place in India or before the world. "So the six main quarters will be safely kept".

These two co-patriots, Vivekânanda and Abhedânanda, from their earliest association and meeting in the Temple Garden seemed the ones singled out by India's destiny to plant for future generations the seed of this

Swami Abhedananda

Swami Vivekananda

Râmakrishna cycle. Among scholars and everywhere to all men and women of education the name of Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna is known. He too belongs to the Ages and to history—a man untutored and unlettered, discovered in their dire need by two of the most erudite scholars and brilliant minds ever to come out of India. It seems an anomaly yet the glory that is Vedânta has come to stay. Nothing can stem the drumbeat of that inward march. From the feet of this Saint upon the banks of the Ganges emanated India's universal synthesis of thought and experience. "Vedânta is the end of knowledge. It is not a philosophy, a religion or a scripture" says this Apostle of Monism. It is the *Will to Know*, the *Will to Become* the unity and that Oneness that in man's basic integrity of mind and soul—"I am That, knowing which all things are known."

Without a Vivekânanda, without an Abhedânada, how far outside India would have travelled the gospel of Srî Râmakrishna is a question we cannot answer. Others beside myself have raised it. But without Râmakrishna where an Abhedânanda, where a Vivekânanda? When the hour hath struck, none can recall time's reverberation—none redispose the arrow shot.

"In 1886, after the departure of Râmakrishna I renounced the world and became a *Sannyâsin* monk * * with Vivekânanda and other co-disciples (*gurubhâis*)." Here is to me an unmarked event in religious history. The voluntary assumption of Brotherhood. A small band of spiritual devotees declaring themselves without benefit of any theological or priestly impressment or office, arranging themselves into a monastic order in their Master's name. Vivekânanda became the beloved spiritual head and elder of their Mission or Math; he governed and gave countenance to the simple rules of this monastic and spiritual Institute,—virtually a self-imposed Democracy stemming from India's ancient hierarchies for Srî Râmakrishna had conferred rebirth upon his Twelve.[1]

"As this was our second birth we gave up our former names". Thus the brilliant son of the line of Rasick Lâl Chandra becomes Abhedânanda, the Apostle of Monism. Again he plunges into his philosophical research to clarify, fortify and complete the synthesis of thought, East and West. Again re-searching the six systems of Hindu philosophy, the *Upanishads* and the *Vedânta-Sutras* not omitting "the commentaries of Sankara, Râmânuja, Nimvârka, Vallabhâcarya and others", as he continues in "my work of self-education."

Then follows the *Sannyâsin* pilgrimage "barefooted form place to place, depending entirely upon alms cooked or uncooked. Whatever chance brought me". He walks the Indian way from one sacred place to another. Kedârnâth, Badarinârâyana, Dwârakâ, and Râmeswaram, Jagannâth and Puri he mentions; tells of meeting many saints and sages like Trailanga Swâmi, Swâmi Bhaskarânanda at Benares, Paohâri Bâbâ at Gâzipur, Vaishnava saints at Brindâvan and "great Vedânta philosophers at Rishikesh" and here he remains to study "Monistic Vedânta philosophy under the great scholar Dhanarâj

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1. I once had a letter from Swâmi Adhedânanda in which he described to me the age-old Brotherhood of *Sannyâsins* in India and told me that initiation comes direct from the Hierarchy—a living power that can be conferred only by one who himself has received the *Sannyâsin* initiation from a *Sannyâsin* Swâmi or teacher. House-holder disciples cannot confer this initiation on another although they may receive initiation from a *Sannyâsin* Swâmi. The Râmakrishna Mission organized and founded by Swâmi Vivekânanda has its headquarters at Belur Math and it was dedicated to the name of the Bhagavân and to the spread of his teachings through selfless works by the disciples.

Giri, who was the eminent Advaita Vedântist of those days."

Ten years he spent in this novitiate in study and practice. Ten years he walked the Indian highways and dwelt in the Himâlayas, fastness enduring "all sorts of privations and hardship". He practised austerities and walked to the sources of the Jamunâ and the Ganges where for three months he lived in the caves of the Himâlayas at an altitude of almost 14,000 feet above sea-level spending most of his time in contemplation of the Absolute. Has the reader ever lived in high altitudes? Seven thousand, eight thousand, ten thousand feet above sea-level? But this was 14,000 feet into the high rarified air of the Himâlayas. It is cold and clear—the faculties are sharpened quickly and then are still. The Swâmi was from the sea level and a great metropolic, a cosmopolite born. Three months he spent in those silences equal to living in a sound-proof room. Where the outer silence takes possession and the inner silence reaffirms to restore the balance and the sanity. Air so thin you hear your thoughts.

Intense and ordinate scholar of historicity, of philosophy, reason and metaphysics he, like St. Paul before him, "tested all things", all learning and experience. When he came to the West he conformed to the dress and customs of the people whereever his Mission called. He taught the laws of thought, the meaning and the fittingness of symbol and of form—gave to men and women everywhere the "why" and the "how" of all Scriptures; told them why they prayed to an anthropomorphic God in heaven, then led them stage by stage through the tested experience of the ages to the realization of the Ultimate within—inspiration and culmination of all sects, phases and aspects of the internal Witness, Saviours of all mankind.

It was in 1896 that Vivekânanda called Abhedânanda from India to London where the former was then lecturing.

Swâmi Abhedânanda told me that it was only his great love for Swâmi Vivekânanda that could have induced him to leave his native land—the India of his long treks, disciplines and studies and that grand living synthesis where life with his Master had brought realization and understanding. So from Calcutta in August 1896 the young Abhedânanda came to London. He tells us that his first lecture was delivered before the Christo-Theosophical Society and that his subject was on the Advaita philosophy of *Pancadasî*. There is a legend told among the older students that so shy was this young monk that at the close of the lecture he swiftly and quietly withdrew and sped down the basement stairs to the lower floor. But Vivekânanda was before him and returned him to lecture room to meet and mingle with the guests. The Advaita philosophy of *Pancadasî* and all the long line of illustrious saints, scholars, *pundits*, his mind teeming with the learning of Europe and the West, empowered with vision and the law, this Abhedânanda so shy and so unsophisticated plunged before a London audience "to take the works" as our modern lads would say.

He met and passed these higher critics and the highbrows for as we follow the records we find Vivekânanda entrusted him with the charge of conducting his classes on Vedânta and the Râja Yoga there. He remains one year in London meeting while there Professors Max Müller and also Paul Deussen of Kiel University to whom Swâmi Vivekânanda introduced him. These men were outstanding scholars. Professor Deussen having translated into German sixty of the *Upanishands* and was author of *Philosophy of the Upanishads*. After the meeting with Swâmi Abhedânanda from whom Max Müller learned much of Srî Râmakrishna he compiled the little work entitled *Life and Sayings of Srî Râmakrishna* and said of him: "Râmakrisha was an original thinker, for he was never brought up within the precincts of any University, and therefore, his teachings were new and original." The Swâmi adds: "This remark made a deep impression upon my mind" I have heard the Swâmi emphasize and repeat this statement before those ultra-elite assemblies where pride of intellect maintained a crust against which aphorism and *sutra* were grand words that left not spark nor impact upon their satisfactions. But this was a new idea, a man unschooled who confounded scholars, West and East. This surely gave pause to their certainties.

The indomitable courage of this man Abhedânanda as a public speaker was amazing and yet he gave no hurt and no offence. He spoke in aphorisms, in metaphors and in plain good English of Western follies and superstitions, always clever and skilful in avoiding Western prejudices and of his presentation of the teachings of Vedânta there was instant and constant approval. As he never offended a listener wherever bigotries might tend, so he never left traumas in any particular ideology, philosophical or religious while making a particular analysis or criticism. He related the history and the growth of thought. He told of symbols and origins, tenets and doctrines in their relationship to true meaning. He told the West *why* it was Christian and not Hindu or Jew. Gave to each his place in the grand category of the Vedânta and by re-relating each and every race and sect to his immortal *Dharma* restored the spiritual dignity of man to his own ideal manhood. Like a beacon at the crossroads of eternity stands Abhedânanda, this Apostle of Monism, guide and Guru to all humanity.

In reading the lectures and his discourses delivered before Indian audiences his approach is the same and his subject matter as always the ultimates, but he calls stern attention to their national potentials, cautions their inertia; even as he does in addressing the Western public rouses them to the need for action but the issue varies. To Indians he stresses the glory of their past, urges the ending of casts and social limitations, charges the youth of the nation to awaken and restore India's *Dharma,* her culture and her grandeur, make her again worthy of ancient inheritances. To the West he stresses the secret of work. Work for work's sake, and not for the profits and the holdings. How he constantly pressed home this issue to the mind of America! Knowledge of the law and not the bargain is to be the reward for work and right action. It is not to dream transcendental dreams in peace retreat and Ashrama. In the Retreat which he founded in the Berkshires, it was always workers that he demanded—those who could not find in labour and in toil the secret of freedom could not find it in meditation—and more, work was meditation. Learn and be free. It is to plough in the marts of men and learn the law, the law of tenet and of tenure. Prayer cannot help the man who turns his back on work. He who flees a helm and compass cannot ride the storm. The lull in the tornado, the crack of doom in men's hearts sterns to right vision and to understanding. Flee not to cave and forest, that comes later. Work, work, work and tramp the roads within the labour and the hour where will be found the love that leads to the "peace that passeth men's understanding." He said to me: "Train yourself. You have much latent power", and then he tossed me free upon the world. All of instruction was contained within those words. The mind prone to lean on statute and on teaching needs rude and sudden shock to link the worth of realism to Self and Reality.

"The Swâmi records in those visits with Professor Max Müller that he had to speak in English as this scholar in Sanskrit "could neither speak in Sanskrit nor understand Sanskrit words when spoken, because as he said, his ears and tongue were not trained in the sounds of Sanskrit utterances, so I exchanged my views with him in English."

Is there not some profound and very wholesome spiritual reason for the chanting of the Vedic truths in *mantra*? Is not the biology of a language also core and quick of inner living, thought and Self?

Again in 1897 at Swâmi Vivekânanda's request Swâmi Abhedânanda crossed the Atlantic to New York where he was given full charge of the work in New York City and the Eastern U.S.A. He delivered many lectures, indefatigable worker that he was and the Vedânta Society was started and placed on a firm foundation. In the next chapters are given some of the records of the activities and growth of this Centre of which the Swâmi for over twenty years was the moving spirit.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Society's activities, the lectures, class instruction and discourses at Ashrama and in the homes where the Swâmi visited were carried on for over twenty years under the Swâmi's able direction. The Publication Department was organized, and a Monthly Bulletin, a small organ, was issued early in 1905 as an independent source of contact to serve more especially those living outside close touch with the Centre. The publication of a lecture by one of the Swâmis each month in its columns afforded very real satisfaction as there were all too many who could not afford to buy the books as new titles appeared upon the sales tables. Also the lending facilities of the library were not so available to those who lived long distances. The increasing number of books appearing over the Swâmi's name made solid foundation for the Publication Department which under the competency of Miss Nablo became entirely self-supporting. The Publication Department maintained a distributing agency for the sale of Indian publications as well. The reading of Swâmi Vivekânanda's *Râja Yoga, Jñâna Yoga, Karma Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga* were commended, and encouraged to be used as text-books, while the Swâmi also urged the students to read Indian history and literature.

During the years of the Swâmi's intensive writing he slept little, working mostly at night. His housekeeper, during my days at the Society House was an elderly lady by the name of Mrs. Robertson. She told me that the light in his study would be burning when she retired at night and she could still see it shining beneath his door when she came downstairs of a morning to start the day's routines. She said: "Few know the Swâmi's complete devotion or how hard he works".

The Swâmi was faithful and tireless in his ministry; a brilliant commentator and analyst of the Vedic scriptures, the

Upanishads and the *Gitâ,* and thorough. He left nothing to speculation, he knew. The philosophy of the West, especially the German philosophy of Western Europe, which he had studied in the years before coming to America, and as his own statements record, he and Vivekânanda made exhaustive research and re-epitomized the thought of Europe. He knew where each mind had failed of the sublime, where each had attained.

I had heard many legends regarding the Swâmi's learning but I never knew until I read the brief Autobiography cataloguing his early years how thorough and profound his academic studies were, nor the wide range they covered. This account appeared in the Indian Press several years before his passing. It is fortunate that it is of record as the Swâmi dwelt lightly and seldom upon his accomplishments.[1]

I recall in particular one Friday evening class meeting at the Vedânta House during which there occurred an instance of Swâmi's vast range of learning and his acumen in meeting an antagonist. It had been an exceptionally interesting hour to the students. When the discourse was at an end and as usual the meeting opened to "questions and answers" a stranger present, and evidently one who had come with intent, boldly contradicted something which the Swâmi had said when he was analyzing a passage from one of the Western philosophers; the stranger went on to cite the book and the words of this scholar in his attempt

[1] In the volume *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* pp. 47-52, compiled and edited by S. Râdhâkrishnan, D.Litt., and J. H. Muirhead, LL.D., F.B.A., this same autobiographical account by Swâmi Abhedânanda is published in accompaniment to his contribution of Philosophy to this Compendium. The name of the Indian paper in which the account appears is *Visvavânî* (Beng.) published by Râmakrishna Vedânta Math, Calcutta.

to refute the Swâmi's statement. Breathless the class waited. The Swâmi was quiet for perhaps a minute or a half, then turning to his antagonist said gently: "If, my friend, you will turn the page and complete the writer's sentence," (and the Swâmi supplied both page and chapter and gave the full text), "you will find I have not spoken other than the truth." At the close of the meeting the guest-stranger slipped silently away before any could ascertain his name or purpose. It was indeed a hard-headed intelligentsia with which the young Swâmi in those early years of the new century had to contend.

The Press, on general principles, was fair and reported carefully and well. Arrogance, when it did occur, usually stemmed from some member of an aspiring cult slipping into class meetings to disturb, or scouting for new material to support a declining creed. Many such read into the teaching some wishful pseudo-mystery of the East and eager for power turned to the Orient for glamour with which to intrigue their followers. On rare occasions scoffers and curiosity-seekers have remained to pray.

As in all young movements, and in seminars, however serious the research, scholarship, science or philosophy, there are always those who ride the tide, the hard work and study (practice) falling to a slow, and in this instance a steadily increasing band of workers who supported the young organization. This Vedânta Society nestled like an oasis of crystal peace in the heart of one of the world's largest, most critical and loneliest of cities. A philosophical centre at whose head presided the wise and learned man whose brilliance and understanding ministered to every need,—nay, restored all spiritual values.

Swâmi Abhedânanda although but thirty-one years of age when he came to America from London[1] was in

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1. Swâmi Abhedânanda first came to America on the 7th August 1897.

philosophy, Indian history and Sanskrit one of the most, if not the most erudite scholar of his day. One University woman said to me: "The Swâmi's is the ablest mind of his times, he is without a second." This was early in my acquaintance with the Society. I lived to learn she had not spoken lightly. Swâmi Abhedânanda was offered the chair in English at Harvard University.[1] Vedic and Sanskrit scholar the chair in English in a leading University in an English speaking nation! Could but Professor Rasick Lâl Chandra have lived to know—the Hindu scholar and father of this Apostle of Monism to the West—the man who had held the chair in English in the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta—would have appreciated such recognition of his son's talents. When I protested to the Swâmi why he declined such an outstanding opportunity he told me that his vow of the *Sannyâsin* precluded acceptance of secular positions that offered monetary or honorary emolument. Truth can not be bought. The *Rishis* give, they do not bargain or subscribe. This vow of poverty and utter resignation to service is why, I once heard him say from the platform, the Swâmis do not marry. They have no world security or means of support for family-life and its entailed responsibilities. This answer he made to a young man whom I had encouraged to attend the lecture. This young man, incidentally my brother, told me that he had never listened to so learned an address, that the speaker's continued flow of logic and coherence was marvellous, but he had to pose the question: "Did the Swâmis not believe in marriage and if they *did* why not for themselves?" which intrigued many Westerners; and which, answered as it was,

[1] There was a rumour current in the Society that the Swâmi had declined an honorary degree in Philosophy from the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. Of this there is no definite authorization although the letter in the Addenda may show some degree of authenticity for the report.

from the platform of one of New York City's large public halls should indeed for all time have laid the rumour that Vedânta students also did not marry.

THE OBJECT OF VEDANTA

The object of Vedânta is not to form a new sect or creed, nor to make proselytes, but to explain through logic and reason the spiritual laws that govern our lives: to show that the True Religion of the soul is not antagonistic to, but in harmony with philosophy and science; to establish that Universal Religion which underlies all the various sects and creeds of special religions; to propagate the principles taught by the great Seers of Truth and religious leaders of different countries and illustrated by their lives and to help mankind in the practical application of these principles in their spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical needs.—Abhedânanda, in *Pacific Vedântin,* June 1902.

The Swâmi tells in *Leaves from My Diary* of a meeting or session requested by Professor William James following Swâmi's lecture on the *Unity of the Ultimate Reality.* The Professor could not align his own psychology with the entirety of monistic Vedânta and invited the Swâmi to his house together with Professors Lanmann, Royce, Shaler and Dr. James, who was chairman of the Cambridge Philosophical Conferences. The discussion, as the Swâmi records, lasted for nearly four hours, the professors all supporting the Swâmi's position in favour of 'Unity'; before the session's close Professor William James concedes the point. Of such were the contentions that strengthened among representative thinkers the directionals given by this Apostle of Monism as early as 1898, when Advaita Vedânta was persistently formulating American philosophy at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. It might be of interest here to mention that early in the last decade I was engaged in some general correspondence in a certain research concerning a group of scientific scholars, and Professor Lanmann's name was among them. I was conducting this correspondence from Abhedânanda Acres and received a personal letter from the Professor asking the whereabouts of that "good man, Swâmi Abhedânanda".

But recently, as the following short reprint from *The Los Angeles Daily News* of February 21, 1944, indicates the larger ideals of Vedânta, first taught two generations ago by the Ṣwâmis Vivekânanda and Abhedânanda, persist their way into the public consciousness in these the identical words so often pronounced by Abhedânanda, the Apostle of Monism. The churches of America are uniting to overcome their common antagonisms. Time and events have made history. Thought and that grand chastity that is the single vision have brought the leavening. Man at last conscious of Unity, through an Inter-Faith forum, is discussing possibilities. Tolerance is the beginning of Unity, understanding is Unity while realization is its attainment. Temple Israel is not far from the Temple of Vivekânanda on Ivar Street in Hollywood, the founder of which is one of the young Swâmis from Belur Math in India. The younger Swâmis are doing good work. They are the bridge that sustains the Vedânta tenets until those tenets have become our way of life.

INTER-FAITH FORUM MEETS WEDNESDAY

> "The Hollywood Inter-Faith Forum will hold its second meeting Wednesday evening, Feb. 23, at 8 p.m., in Temple Israel, 1740 N. Ivar, in Hollywood, forum officials said yesterday.
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> "Religious Majorities and Minorities; Is Unity with Diversity Possible?" will be the topic of discussion, in view of the president's call for the observance of Brotherhood week throughout the country. Representatives of the Protestant, Jewish and Roman Catholic faiths will give 12 minute addresses on the subject."

material for the intensive training that went on within the Society's inner precincts. Those who worshipped in form and ceremony and insisted upon a certain catering to ritual and observances. Among the *Jñânins* nothing so incited to resistance as some obstinate triviality forcing itself into their austerity of thought after a long and hard-earned capitulation to an inclusive and universal tenet almost realized.

I well recall one holiday when free from my work at the office I volunteered to take over the chapel duties and prepare the library for the Swâmi's weekly reception of callers. My devotion, if it could be socalled was the particular emphasis I had accomplished in the shining and orderly appearance of the rooms. I turned to my friend and senior, Sister Bhavâni, and said: "How does it look—will it pass?" and as she gave her smiling assent, in walked on tiptoe one of the die-hard devotees of ceremonialism and rearranged the Swâmi's chair so his back would not be to the altar. "He never sits with his back to Srî Râmakrishna's pictures," she whispered.

"But the sun will be in his eyes and he cannot see his visitor," I protested.

"Well, put it this way," she went on, turning the chair again.

"Yes, and then the visitor cannot see the Swâmi. After all," I said, "is God only on the altar? I supposed He was everywhere." Her answer was a lofty insistence upon her chapel technics. I am ashamed at this day to have to admit I outstayed her leaving and restored the original arrangement. Years later I saw her in Swâmi Paramânanda's Ashrama in La Cresecenta in California still tiptoeing through her special devotions. Thus the old quarrel of the mind went on—formal worship against that universal abstraction. And the Swâmi to all our difficulties in the Society and with each other was the constant and the equalizer. He championed none. He answered all and every need.

In time we *Jñânins* learned to include the *Bhaktas* in our scheme of things and they I suppose, learned to tolerate us. I came to know some of them very well and found their characters were near to saintly.

I have tried on several rare occasions to practise a *tapas* of pure *Bhakti*,—formal worship of the Divine Mother through meditation. It is a sure way to the Divine but to one of my particular mental composition as sure a way to an emotional conversion which I found I did not want through either philosophy or religion. I need tempering, hardening and a cool sane measuring of idea and precept in experience and tenet. My husband calls it "the search for terminals." How can it be better said? I recall when I first heard the Swâmi use the words "the inevitability of the law." My soul responded as doth the body to an electric shock. I was galvanized to some deep-seated attention and my mind formed the words: "Thank God there is something that is inevitable, some foundation—some thing from which one could not escape". Here indeed for me was the beginning of the truth.

The years have mellowed and matured these early outlooks and I have learned what the Swâmi so constantly stressed that all could not realize by only one path. Mankind is typically and emotionally co-ordinated to a varied existence and living. Each must learn to evolve his own individual Yoga while practising a given technic of a larger and more general classification covering the natural and mental approaches to premise and experience. Through his ever watchful care I struggled on with my *Jñâna* tendencies against the elders, and the older students in years. Through the infinitesimal incidents of group-culture came courage and a growing integrity that feared no opponent. I learned to lean on tenet; personality disappeared and in its place came a resurgence of patience and tolerance. The Swâmi was not the Teacher so much as the great enactor of a composite life and living enriched and made tangible to the faculties. He gave placement to principle—evaluated our every experience, shouldered, as it were, the inept that we might resume or assume an individual spiritual responsibility. Often he would himself pose questions or situations and watching our ambitions, our pride and our arrogances leave us to the mind's eventual rectitude and common sense. Belaboured we sometimes returned to him and he would analyze for us the mental tendencies and return us to those basic simplicities which we had forgotten. Thus we favoured ones, within the aura of his disciplines, and upon whom he conferred the rank of discipleship, were especially blessed in the harsher lessons that came swift and persistent in the intensified training reserved for the novitiate, the mind that *would* seek "terminals". The Swâmi had much to accomplish. Time was short and student material too involved in established activities and responsibilities to withdraw entirely to study and practise. No occasion was overlooked, nothing too trivial upon which to endorse a lesson or make tentative analysis. Realignments were slow, old tendencies stubborn. One he handed me his pen-knife —"cut it"—he admonised as I struggled with the string round a package of manuscript he was turning over to me to prepare for the printer. To this day I hear the instruction "cut it" when I am tempted to delay issues. The *Guru's* patience was imperturbable. How often his mind and his heart must have wearied over us and how often we must have vexed his determinations. His tenderness and love stemmed from ancient hierarchies—one felt so often the swell of that high stream from which he sourced his soundings and his vision. A seed sown in a student's heart must bear fruit. He knew the laws of the mind and his faith was redoubtable. His love for us was so grand, so inclusive, he could wait and persist an eternity. As the acorn, so the tree and none better than the Swâmi knew the seed and his sowing. With the same sobriety and earnestness he gave an acolyte some symbol for meditation, he softened another's bitter experience to new endeavour, or himself entered the high and often noisy argument to strengthen or formulate a disciple's reason or demonstrate a fallacy. This man who could have shone among America's greatest savants was as thorough, as able and as serious watching over the growth of his little band of disciples, the students of the Society and the *Ashrama* as is some solitary scientist in his laboratory discovering in the interest of research a new medical treatment for humanity.

Thus the Swâmi taught, and thus he hung high upon the composite mental space the religion and the philosophy of the *Upanishads,* the Monistic Vedânta giving urge and impetus to America's coming of age. Religion and science are but opposite approaches to the same eternal Truth for ever resident in the Spirit of Man. "Search for Truth and you will find it within your own soul", "Knock and it shall be opened unto you,"—*when* you turn within to the God in the Self.

The disciples were the scaffolding by which the Swâmi positioned the eternal Vedânta tenets in the West.

He gave us the Law of the *Guru*—so epitomized us every one with the tenets that we became the *intent* of our destiny.

CHAPTER SIX

In these my later years of life when the old Society activities are mostly in retrospect, I seem to realize more and more the dominant actuality and import of Swâmi Abhedânanda's advent in America. Two things he accomplished that are an outstanding accompaniment of his long career. *One,* the emphasis which he laid upon the divine illumination of his Master, Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna, modern Saint, *Avatâr* and Mystic who epitomized the ancient Indian teaching into what is known as the Vedânta philosophy. We in the West know it through Swâmis Vivekânanda and Abhedânanda as the synthesis of universal thought and living. Reality that eternal Presence of the *Atman* (God in man) in every human being regardless of race and creed and colour. *Two,* the banner of Swâmi Vivekânanda which he held aloft so constantly that the few who met and knew India's "Patriot-saint" were to become the many who knew only of and about him.

A lady recently wrote me, January 4, 1944, a Miss Annie Hagelin (Sister Pârvati) of Connecticut, who had been one of Swâmi Abhedânanda's earliest and most devoted workers when the Society was in its inception saying: "Here in the East where Swâmi Abhedânanda did his best work in this country no one seems to remember him or ever give him any credit. They all remember and talk about the Swâmi Vivekânanda and are all his followers. Perhaps it is because he was more widely known and they like to live in the shadow as it were."

Another student and disciple, Mr. Thomas E. LePage, known to the intimates as Haridâs, who was manager of the Ashrama in Connecticut and host for the Swâmi during the months when he was on tour or giving a series of lectures at the Vedânta Society House in New York City, said he believed the reason for this is that the Swâmi Vivekânanda gave the pattern, and was the first to bring the knowledge of the Vedânta philosophy to America at the World Parliament of Religions; that only those students of a generation ago and who had studied definitely under Abhedânanda, realize how the teaching under his able leadership found root in America's needs and potentials.

My own answer to this lament is that one of the most deplorable pauses in the history of human ideation or the course of any great movement is that in the inculcation of principles and their ready reception the labourer is so often forgotten, the Apostle overlooked. The purpose perhaps of biography is to record and return in some degree to the public mind memory of the true stature that is the man. He who re-enacts in every period for the multitude the measure that is attainment; redirecting old postings to the frontiers of thought. Thus it is that in every age and by every race the livingness of the *Upanishads* is written and rewritten upon the spirit and the Self. Fortunate, indeed is that nation which finds an Interpreter of the grandeur of mind and spirit and able to posit a people's articulation of the universal experience. So realistically did the devotion and selflessness of Abhedânanda to his brother Apostle register and penetrate the national mind of America that many still believe there was only a Vivekânanda. This the self-immolation and modesty of a man who laboured for a quarter of a century with materialism, superstition, and a sentimentality which often dissembled under the name of religion, to establish the spiritual authority of right thought in the forlorn and hardened minds of men and women.

If you can imagine a St. Paul without the fanfare and emotionalism of his ministry; a St. Paul without the dramatics of a colourful and fervent apostleship, holding to the inspired and determined issue of placing self-revealed truth firmly and persistently in the hearts of men,—you will then have some small conception of the immediacy and the reality in this message of Vedânta as taught by Swâmi Abhedânanda in the early years of the twentieth century.

There were only two American writers previous to Abhedânanda who had in any serious way influenced the thinking people toward a vital universalism—the idea of the unity of man,—and these thinkers were in selective groups almost isolated in their special idealism, and not considered to be practical. Readers of Whitman and Emerson were termed "visionaries."

Abhedânanda with his continence of thinking, his order and law in the realm of philosophy slowly brought home to his public the meaning of the Scriptures—taught them the *how* and the *why* of the gospels through a workable presentation of the central theme of all men's hope, brought them to a common experience. His benediction, his metaphors, his final epitomes in lectures and often his arrangement of the table of contents in his many published works held the open sesame to constructive meditation; held before the reader that approach through reason, work, worship and experience and the quick and central motif of every scripture "I and my Father are one," therefore "I love my brother as Myself." Indeed, "Those who know Reality belong to a Race apart, the Race that never dies".[1] From the despair of a mind broken and defeated the Swâmi raised the novitiate and the multitude alike to those subliminal fringes where reason ceases and realization of "truth prevails"; where God Almighty, the God of our Fathers, the God of men and angels encloses and includes the soul to its Self. Abhedânanda selflessly and with steadfastness, combined with hard and constant work, laboured on with the mind of America. North, South, West and East he carried his seminar and forged the living quest into and for the forgotten man—the man left upon the

[1] If the reader would care to consider progressive persistence of these truths into the national consciousness read that interesting book entitled the *Soul of the Universe* by Gustav Stromberg—a work of original scientific findings.

ruins of an outgrown premise; the man whose intellectual honesty had brought him to a materialism he did not want, through his struggle with untested and empirical reasoning beyond his depth.

Into such conflicts Abhedânanda brought the light of sanity, sowed the seed of the Indian synthesis "Monistic Vedânta," taught man how to turn without to the eternal thesis that is the highest Self and in the restoration sanity returned. No longer this forgotten man struggled with in anthropomorphic salvation alien to the dignity of the *will to know,* the will to test premise and tenet, doctrine and system by experience. He learned to replace belief and faith by realization. This technic the Swâmi taught through meditation, work, reason and experience. *Yoga* means 'Union'—there was no mystery—no hidden secret doctrine. The breathing exercises were for purification of the nervous system, elimination of phlegm and the stimulation of cellular chaos into currencies and orientation. These breathing and Yoga exercises are as old as India but in this country a popular mystery has grown up around them. For very good reasons their practice was not permitted to students indiscriminately. Save under the direct and personal supervision of the Swâmi could consent to use them be obtained. Some types of men and women were not adapted to the swift and progressive realignments such intensified technics induced; while others must take them in slower tempo. I know because I have practised them. Abhedânanda was the only Swâmi to my knowledge who gave them, at least during my affiliation with the Society. He was one of the Great Ones. He carried the power of Srî Râmakrishna. Gradually the West took note. Little coteries of scientific men, philosophers and psychologists came to learn, and to listen. The Swâmi's classes and his larger following were mostly of representative men and women, artists, musicians, doctors and from all the professional sectors of a cosmopolitan society.

This teaching of Monistic Vedânta was to come alive in a nation young in history though old in suffering bloodstreams and commingled idealogies imported from an exhausted Europe. Fervent in our democratic idealism dedicated to all humankind, yet for and of itself this nation had but a confused and chaotic religious philosophy.

The practical wisdom of Benjamin Franklin, penned for a struggling pioneer age, no longer served with its maxims from Poor Richard's Almanac; nor did the high polemics of Thomas Paine hammering with his *Rights of Man* and his *Age of Reason* upon old loyalties; neither did the puritanical New England orthodoxy persisting its witchcraft and tyranny into the lexicon of a forming democracy. The liberal movement of Ingersoll gave momentum and power to a fashionable and sophisticated materialism and humanistic philosophy devoid of all personal contact with spiritual experience. Paralleling this was the rising secretarian wave from which all the earlier endeavour and grandeur were expurgated or forgotten. The intelligentsia of America had gone rampant upon a new fear lest the mind should capitulate to some subtle superstition in the word that is "faith", while its very denial ended all spirituality in an apostasy of sanity and reason. This the America gallant, hard, arrogant, or maudlin in sentimental emotionalism whereever religious concepts at all penetrated. And beneath this conflict everywhere a starved and lonely thinking. To reach the central core of meaning, find the reasoned mind, give pause in this circus pageant, establish and temper the public to some semblance of rectitude against rising and competing cults was indeed a Herculean task.

Earnest disciples of these religious factions and often their leaders, frequently came to the Society House to consult the Swâmi hoping to find confirmation and support for their various theologies. Some few listened, most left resolved to carry to the end their blind leading of the blind. They demanded a glamour which the Swâmi did not have—only the profundity of simplicity had he to give and this they could not or would not see. None would he accept without at least some forthright attitude to think through, to learn by an applied psychology. The *will to be honest* with one's self is the first requisite of studentship. Integrity does not fool the mind.

Typical indeed the temper of the century that such a work as *Treason of the Intellectuals* by Julien Benda did not make its appearance, pertinent as it is of the History of European Thought, until 1928, long after the impact of Vedânta in the West. The following quotations are from *Treason of the Intellectuals*. They are singularly revealing in that they show the scholar's tendency to rest upon securities rather than faith as Benda so quotes Renouvier: "The world is suffering from lack of faith in a transcendental truth."

"Peace * * is only possible if men cause to place their happiness in the possession of things 'which cannot be shared,' and if they raise themselves to a point where they adopt an abstract principle superior to their egotisms. In other words, it can only be obtained by a betterment of human morality. * * not only do men today steel themselves entirely against this, but the very first condition of peace, which is to recognize the necessity for this progress of the soul, is seriously manaced. A school arose in the nineteenth century which told men to expect peace from enlightened self-interest, from the belief that a war, even when victorious, is disastrous, especially to economic transformations, to 'the evolution of production,' in a phrase, to factors totally foreign to their moral improvement, from which, these thinkers say, it would be frivolous to expect anything. So that humanity, even if it had any desire for peace, is exhorted to neglect the one effort which might procure it, an effort it is delighted not to make. The cause of peace, which is always surrounded with adverse factors, in our days has one more against it—the pacifism which pretends to be scientific".[1] "* * it is impossible to preach the spiritual and the universal without undermining the institutions whose foundations are the possession of the material and the desire to feel distinct from others." Benda quotes Renân: "The mother-country is a worldly thing; the man who wants to play the angel will always be a bad patriot".[2]

From all this it follows that the "clerk" (the spiritual teacher)[3] is only strong if he is clearly conscious of his essential qualities and his true function, and shows mankind that he is clearly conscious of them. In other words, he declares to them that his kingdom is not of this world, that *the grandeur of his teaching lies precisely in this absence of practical value, and that the right morality for the prosperity of the kingdoms which are of this world, is not his, but Caesar's.* When he takes up this position, the "clerk" is cruified, but he is respected, and his words haunt the memory of mankind.[1] * * it seems to me that human affairs can only adopt the religions of the true "clerk" under penalty of becoming divine, i.e., of perishing as human. This has been clearly seen by all lovers of the divine who did not desire the destruction of what is human. This is marvelously expressed by one of them when he makes Jesus say so profoundly to His disciple: "My son, I must not give you a clear idea of your substance * * for it you saw clearly what you are, you could no longer remain so closely united to your body. You would no longer watch over the preservation of your life".[2] But though I think it a bad thing that the "clerk's" religion should possess the lay world, I think it still more to be dreaded that it should not be preached to the layman at all, and that he should thus be allowed to yield to his practical passions without the least shame or the least, even hypocritical, desire to raise himself however slightly above them. "There are a few just men who prevent me from sleeping"—that was what the realist said of the teachers of old. Nietzsche, Barres, and Sorel do not prevent any realist from sleeping; on the contrary. This is the novelty I want to

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[1] Extract and footnote from *Treason of the Intellectuals*, by Julien Benda, Translated by Richard Aldington, pp. 185-186. Copyright 1928 by William Morrow and Co., by permission of William Morrow and Co.

Here is an example: "Universal peace will come about one day, not because men will become better (one cannot hope for that) but because a new order of things, new science, new economic needs, will impose a state of peace on them, just as the very conditions of their existence formerly placed and maintained them in a state of war." (Anatole Frânce: *Sur lâ Pierre blânche*). Note the refusal, mentioned above, to believe in any possible betterment of the human soul.

[2] Extract from *Treason of the Intellectuals*, by Julien Benda, Translated by Richard Aldington, p. 190.

[3] The parentheses are the author's.

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1. Extract and footnote from *Treason of the Intellectuals* by Julien Benda, translated by Richard Aldington, p. 191.

I consider that "My kingdom is not of this world" may be said by all whose activity is not directed to practical ends: The artist, the metaphysician, the scientist *in so far as he finds satisfaction in the practice of science and not in its results*. Many will tell me that they and not the Christian are the true "clerks," for the Christian accepts the ideas of justice and charity only for the sake of his salvation. No one will deny, however, that men, even Christians, exist, who accept this idea with no practical end in view.

2. Malebranche: *Meditations Chretiennes*, ix. 19.

point out, which to me seems so serious. It seems to me serious that a humanity, which is more than ever obsessed by the passions of the world, should receive from its spiritual leaders the command: "Remain faithful to the earth".[1]

The obvious law of human substance is the conquest of things and the exaltation of the impulses which secure this conquest. Only through an amazing abuse were a handful of men at desks able to succeed in making humanity believe that the supreme values are the good things of the spirit.[2]

The Swâmi taught only that which he himself had realized from out his own experience. He was no *raconteur*. He made the way plain that religion, philosophy and life were one Reality, one concrete experience; he taught that faith and belief of itself, work, experience and worship, however sincere or devoted without an applied psychology could not lead the candidate to that high norm which he held before his true sudents—that internalization of one's faculties to raise man to any sublime experience or realization as opposed to the externalization of spiritual doctrine, creed or code. Truth is within and the high purpose of all religion is to consecrate that unity in experience, intuition or in reason to the supreme oneness that is God, object and subject of a purposed living.

Many students declared themselves for the *Sannyâsin* path in their sincere desire to emulate the life of the Great Ones of India. This Swâmi discouraged. "Take a little of this Vedânta Philosophy", he would say; "apply it and further your endeavours in goodness and truth. Make yourselves successful in a few precepts—

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1. Extract from *Treason of the Intellectuals*, by Julien Benda, Translated by Richard Aldington, pp. 192-193.
2. Extract from *Treason of the Intellectuals*, by Julien Benda, Translated by Richard Aldington, pp. 198-199.

practise and perfect yourselves." He at one time told me that the people, especially the women, of the West were too electrical in their mental and nervous texture to become devotees after the Indian pattern. Too close to an emotional ecstacy rather than an ordered and understanding fervour. Prof. Râdhâkrishnan in the following sentence gives this a nice distinction: "We have to force utterance into feeling, feeling into thought and thought into universal consciousness; only then do we become conscious of the deep peace of the eternal".[1] The American women, he told another student of my acquaintance, were too inclined to plunge, throw away their jewels and possessions under the slightest experience with ecstacy and its uplift from the prevailing mores. Only fitting action, the *Gitâ* teaches, is worthy and brings merit. After a few years of study of the American people he laid less and less stress upon Yoga exercises and the breathing lessons were, as I said before, not encouraged; when allowed always given under his personal advice and counsel. American men were losing initiative in worldly affairs tending to go and live apart. He wished no monastic system. He taught discrimination—more and more he laid emphasis upon the secret of work—work for its own sake and less for gain and profit. Bliss through unmixed motive and earnest endeavour—thus he taught the broad path that led to unity in variety and thus man learned to serve his brother knowing his brother and himself were one in spirit and in Truth.

From all success he extracted the poison of pride and vanity. The real student must learn to lay his gains large and small at the feet of a grand Ideal. Merit is for another—for thee along faith in work. "Great shall be your reward through *unattachment* to objects and possessions." Meaning and the significance of right thought and right action, the "fitting action" of the *Gitâ,* alone leads the soul through the world of phenomena to its peace and to its freedom.

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[1] Prof. Râdhâkrishnan: *Philosophy of Upanishads*, p. 189.

And America responded. Ere one knew these sublime truths were persisting their way into the public mind, the light of a higher intelligence found expression in press and pulpit. Two years before I met the Swâmi I was strangely in his care. When I first learned of the Order of Srî Râmakrishna and of the Swâmi I was in a distant city. Through some vital need, some inner appeal I was being drawn as to an oasis of Light. This I learned happened to many, as though the living precepts were being graved upon a people's necessity. Thus was the positioning,—emprise and content of a vital inner experience for all mankind. None were exempt. Thought was becoming an illumined Way of Life, the Will awakened without indoctrination, without conversion.

It has been said by Eastern sages that to live within the provinces of the Holy Ones is in time to become holy. Something of even larger import was taking place. The majestic universal teaching was being oriented so failmly, so quietly and so persistently that a national continuity of inner values, and intuititive perception was pointing the spirit of men into a religious living beyond sect or creed or race. Representative America was taking form in the sciences and the arts, in the press and in the pulpit. Psychology began to lose its provincialism.

Many universities have now added to their curriculm departments in Extra-sensory Perception. Science is becoming reverent before the Unknown. Medicine has admitted at least the need of mind in the healing of the body, has admitted there *is* an Ectoplasm. But beyond all these commitments the Swâmi held aloft the Monistic Vedânta, the synthesis of life and thought *and* Spirit as the perfected character to whom alone was possible union with the Divine, that goal of all religions.

The following contribution to the *Prabuddha Bhârata*, May 1900, is of very real interest as written by a man of substance and standing in the World of Letters several decades before the experiments were first instituted at Duke University in Extra-sensory Perception:

> "We have repeatedly heard from Mrs. Piper in trance, things of which we were not at the moment aware. On my mother-in-law's second visit to the medium, she was told that one of her daughters was suffering from a severe pain in the back that day. This altogether unusual occurrence, unknown to the sitter proved to be true.
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> "My wife and brother received from Mrs. Piper the announcement of my aunt's death in New York before we had received the telegram breaking the news to us.
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> "The most convincing things said about my own immediate household were either very intimate or very trivial. Unfortunately the former things are private and personal. She told of my killing a grey and white cat with ether, and described how it had spun around and around before dying. She told how my New York aunt had written a letter to my wife, warning her against all mediums, and then went off on a most amusing criticism full of traits of the excellent woman's character.
>
> "She was strong on the events in our nursery, and gave striking advice during our first visit to her about the way to deal with certain 'tantrums' of our second child, 'little Billy boy', as she called him, reproducing his nursery name. She told how the crib creaked at night, how a certain rocking-chair creaked mysteriously, how my wife had heard footsteps on the staircase, etc. Insignificant as these things sound when read, the accumulation on of a large number of them has an irresistible effect"—Professor William James of Harvard.

"Knowledge is *not* power, Bacon to the contrary". With these astounding words Swâmi Abhedânanda addressed a vast auduience of New York City's intellectuals gathered one Sunday afternoon in Carnegie Hall.

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A gentleman was pessent who for the first time heard the Swâmi. He told me that in passing the entrance to the Hall he saw the Swâmi's name and was intrigued by the fact that he was from India. So he loitered until the appointed hour and then found a seat in a secluded corner. "But the Swâmi found me out and addressed his lecture directly to me. After the lecture I was impelled to go forward and meet him. He invited me to visit the Society Headquarters. My long search was over." This student was to become one of the Swâmi's first and faithful disciples. He became something perhaps more intimate, a *chelâ* if one can so use the term in America. More than any I have ever known he loved and served the Swâmi as a *chelâ*. He was a strong soul and placed himself between every difficulty and his Teacher; he shouldered work none others could or would perform, and assumed a responsibility few were cognisant of in the intuitive directionals. Of those tendencies that made for waste in a busy man's mission he made short shrift. Always the onerous task and the shock of any sudden conflict he spared the Swâmi especially during the years of his Ashram novitiate. One student likened the love of the Swâmi and this disciple as unto that of David and Jonathan: "Because he loved him as his own soul."[1]

In this so emphatic a thesis the Swâmi that Sunday afternoon held *Novum Organum*—the great Baconian edict of the West—up to a progressive and penetrating analysis, an analysis which much include and incorporate subject. The known is not synthesis from which along power derives. Noumena, not phenomena, is the source of power, knowledge and fact notwithstanding. Emerson has said that fact is not truth and truth only is power. Facts are not self-evident truths. Realization of Truth is power, empirical philosophy to the contrary. Thus the Apostle taught. His lectures were axial, they contained hidden intent for wor-

[1] I Sam. 18 : 3.

shiper, Monist, the worker or the Yogin. Each found the maxim for his need or enquiry. No one left the hall or class room without the tenet or emphasis to his solution and none could hide his terror or his pain from the Swâmi's searching mind.

One of the most cogent and reasoned expositions of Monism ever delivered by the Apostle is the abstract which follows from Swâmi Abhedânanda's lecture on *Spirit and Matter*, later republished as the opening chapter in his collection of essays under the title *Self-knowledge*. It is an unexampled epitome and analysis of Monism, the subject over which writers East and West have built their philosophies.

This to our mind is the essence of Advaita Vedânta which is also Monism of the East that we have yet to find. This, the Swâmi goes on say, is the *Oversoul* of Emerson, the *Substantia* of Spinoza; the *Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer. It is the same thing as the *Ding an Sich* or the transcendental *Thing-in-itself* of Kant; Plato called it the *Good* "while in the Vedânta it is called *Brahman*, the absolute substance of the universe, the infinite and eternal source of matter and mind, of object and subject. This substance is not many but one. All varieties of phenomena have come out of this one source, *Brahman*, and into it they will be reduced at the time of dissolution. It is the universal Energy, the mother and producer of all forces. We know that all forces are related to one another and that they are, as modern science explains, the manifestations of the same eternal energy or the infinite substance. From this one source all mental and physical phenomena and material forces have come into existence, and have evolved into various forms and shapes".

ABSTRACT ON MONISM

"This is Monism. The Monistic thinkers of the present age, like Ernst Hæckel and others, admit this one eternal substance as the source of mind, matter and all forces. They also accept the great truth which has always been taught by Vedânta: 'From that infinite substance or *Brahman*, the Absolute Being, have evolved life-force or *Prâna*, mind, all the mental activities, and the sense powers, which are included in the meaning of the term *spirit* or subject on the one hand, and, on the other, space or ether, and all gaseous, liquid and solid objects which are understood by matter!' Matter in its simplest state can be reduced to the same infinite substance *Brahman*, which forms the background of mind or spirit. Therefore, Vedânta teaches that the eternal substance is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. Although it is one, still it appears as many by its inscrutable power known in Vedânta as *Mâyâ*.

"This world is not made up of dead matter alone. It is not the product of the combination of those minute particles called atoms. Until lately the Western physicists, chemists and other materialists believed that these atoms were indivisible units floating in the infinite space attracting and repelling one another, mechanically producing the elements of nature and creating the phenomenal world. But now, through the application of electricity, * * has provided that the socalled indivisible atoms can be subdivided into still finer *electrons*, which are nothing but the force-centres of the ancient Hindu scientist. If atoms are made up of electrons and electrons are but force-centres, where do they exist? They exist in that primordial ocean of infinite substance or *Brahman*, the receptacle of the eternal energy, which is in turn the mother of all forces. Thus, we can understand how matter and force are related to the one substance or *Brahman*. The objective side of that substance appears as matter, and the subjective side as spirit.

"I have already said that it is a scientific truth that matter is indestructible and uncreatable; so is force.

Matter and force can be transformed into various manifestations, but can never be destroyed. Now the question rises: If the one half of the world or objective matter and force be uncreatable and indestructible, then what is the nature of spirit? Is it creatable and destructible? If the objective half of the universe be uncreatable and indestructible, how can the other half, the subjective mind or spirit, be creatable and destructible? That is impossible. Spirit or mind in its simplest from is equally uncreated and indestructible. If matter or object be eternal, then the spirit or subject must also be eternal to make it possible for the object to be eternal. Who will know that matter and force are eternal, if the spirit or subject be not equally eternal? This point has been overlooked by most of the eminent thinkers and scientists of different countries. The eternality of matter and force or energy presupposes the eternality of spirit or mind. If the one falls, both will disappear. Therefore, the ultimate analysis of spirit and matter shows that both are uncreatable, indestructible and eternal. If the one pole of a magnet be eternal, the other pole must necessarily be eternal. Furthermore, the neutral point where both meet must also be eternal. This universe is like a gigantic magnet, one pole of which is matter, and the other is spirit, while the neutral point is the absolute substance. For this reason these three, matter, spirit, and *Brahman* are eternal.

"In Vedânta, spirit is called the *Atman*, the cognizer, the perceiver and the subject. It is our true Self. It existed in the eternal past and will continue to exist in the eternal future. Nothing can destroy it. The phenomenal world, which is the object of sense perception, may change from one form into another, but the *Atman* or Self will never change. It is absolutely unchangeable. Weapons cannot pierce it, water cannot moisten it, fire cannot burn it, nor can the air dry it. It is indissoulble, immutable, and immortal substance. It is not destroyed at the time of death. Death is the property of everything within the realm of time and space. All objects that have form are subject to death. Birth is followed by death. That which is born must die. Our body will die, because it had its birth and exists in space and time. But the *Atman* or spirit cannot die because it was never born and is beyond space and time. If you try to think of the birth of your spirit, you will never be able to find an absolute beginning; therefore, *Atman* is beginningless and endless. Everything which can be perceived by our senses will change and pass away, while the *Atman* or spirit will remain for ever.

"Here it may be asked whether spirit is one or many? The same question may be asked of matter. Is matter one or many? We have seen that matter as objective substance is one, although it appears as many on account of its manifestations within space and time. Similarly, says Vedânta, there is one eternal Spirit or Subject of the universe, of which the individual spirits or egos are but so many manifestations. They are but parts of one stupendous whole or universal Spirit or God. God is the eternal Subject or Knower of the world. He is the cosmic Ego, the sum-total of all individual spirits or egos and more. He is the one Infinite Being, the eternal ocean, which contains so many eddies or souls. The cosmic Ego or God is the first-born Lord of the universe. He is the first and highest manifestation of the Absolute substance of *Brahman*. He is the material and the efficient cause of all phenomena. He is the projector of evolution. He differentiates subject from object, spirit or ego from matter or non-ego. In Him everything exists, through Him all beings live, and into Him they return in the end. He is more powerful than all the individual spirits together. We possess small powers; as our knowledge is limited so are our powers; but God is the one substance whose power is unlimited. He dwells everywhere. He forms the background of our individual spirit and possesses eternal knowledge. He is the Soul of our souls. We should meditate on Him and worship Him; then we shall understand the relation between spirit and matter. 'He is the one Eternal Being in the midst of all non-eternal forms and names. He is the one source of intelligence in the midst of insentient matter. He makes that one substance appear as many and fulfills all desires dwelling within the hearts of all creatures. Whosoever realizes Him in his soul attains to eternal Bliss even in this life."[1]

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[1] Vide *Self-knowledge* (1944), pp. 13-20.

PART TWO

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES AND HISTORY

THE GOLDEN DAYS

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES AND HISTORY

CHAPTER SEVEN

In the early days of the Society's inception office and library headquarters were established on October 15, 1899, at 146 East Fifty-fifth Street in New York, through the co-operation of students and friends of the growing Vedânta movement. Lectures were resumed on October 22, 1899 in Tuxedo Hall at 59th Street and Madison Avenue and continued throughout the winter and spring on Sunday afternoons at three o'clock. Lectures and classes were also held during the week at the office and library rooms with hours daily from two until five P.M., and from seven-thirty to nine P.M., for the general Society concerns, and sale of pamphlets and books on the Vedânta philosophy including the ever-increasing titles of the public lectures delivered by Swâmi Abhedânanda. Current periodicals published under the direction of the Swâmis in India appeared regularly upon the tables. This was the beginning of a library "which was to contain the best books on Metaphysics, Philosophy and Religion especially of Vedânta literature". During the two preceeding years Swâmi Abedânanda had carried his lectureship into many states and had lectured before the Harvard Conferences and at Greenacre.

The Swâmi came to New York from England on the 7th August 1897. He delivered three lectures each week for seven months, besides lectures in neighbouring states, cities and towns. At the close of the season the Swâmi would travel over the country at the invitation of friends who had heard his New York lectures, speaking everywhere to eager and interested audiences.

The Swâmi records the story of his ministry and his Apostleship in America in a few condensed sentences: "I travelled extensively all through the United States, Canada, Alaska and Mexico, and delivered addresses on various phases of the Vedânta philosophy in all the principal cities of those countries. I delivered a series public lectures on *Krishna and His Teachings; Zoroaster and His Teachings; Taoism; Laotze and His Teachings; Lâmâism in Tibet; Shintoism in Japan; Buddha and His Teachings; Christ and His Teachings; Mohammed and His Teachings; Râmakrishna and His Teachings;* under the title of the *Great Saviours of the World.*"

He tells nothing of his struggles, makes no note of the Society's activities nor of the splendid progress it had made under his able direction. Nothing does he record of the fourteen years of the Ashram—that Vedic School he built in the Berkshire Hills where through applied psychology he gave his disciples to the Soul of Reason and to their highest Self. Makes no mention of this Ashram near West Cornwall, Connecticut, culmination perhaps, of the fondest dream of all his years where knowledge of the composition and mental texture, the analysis of one's own mind was thesis and *raison d'etre.* Nothing has he recorded of the broad fields wherein he laboured as *Guru* to the West, nor of his dissemination of principles so placed, working in such utter anonymity as to make the rooting and the culture difficult to trace to him as source. His greatest accomplishments he gave to the directionals and in placing emphasis upon scientific and religious trends, gave to origins and conclusion those "terminals" which ushered in universal alignments and tenets by which the common mind becomes its own environment and witness. He had no time nor interest for self, so single-minded was he in an all-inclusiveness.

He spent his summers, at the season's close, in travel that he might test the pulse of public thought, knowing instinctively the need and its fulfilment; where a lecture or a personal appearance would key the national trend to spiritual endeavour. Centres were sometimes organized following these public appearances although this was not the import of his journey; yet every summer's itinerary was punctuated by spontaneous addresses and highlighted by those of invitation and schedule.

Something of the largesse of his mind and something of that eternal pristine *Atman* lies hidden in this Apostle's every lecture. He gives utterance to the Law and he enforces home to his every listener the priceless boon of freedom which is promise and substance of man's very living —not by faith, nor even by knowledge but by the assurance of the Law where right aligment includes high indentification and that realization which comes of ordered sequence. As early as 1898 he was expounding the Law in a lecture entitled "*The Ideal of Vedânta and How to Attain it*:

> "The ideal of Vedânta is to solve the problem of life, to point out the aim of human existence, to make our ways of living better and more harmonious with the universal Will that is working in nature, to make us realize that the will which is now working through our bodies, is, in reality, a part and parcel of that universal Will * *. Its ideal is to show us how we can live in this world without being overcome by sorrows and misery, without being afflicted by sufferings and misfortunes that are sure to fall on every human being in some way or other; how to conquer death in this life, how we can embrace death without being frightened in the least."

The Apostle adds, as he invariably epitomizes the macrocosm in the microcosm in his every period—

> "And above all, the chief object of Vedânta is to make us live the life of unselfishness, purity and attain to perfection in this life".

The word "perfection" with Abhedânanda is axial and interchangeable with his use of the word "freedom," and then he goes on to inform us that the meaning of universal brotherhood is:

"* * that kind of brotherly feeling which proceeds from pure disinterested love * * that feeling which proceeds from the realization of the oneness of spirit. The mission of Vedânta is to establish that oneness and to bring harmony, peace, toleration amongst different religions, sects, creeds and denominations that exist in this world. Its object is to teach us how we can recognize the rights of all men and women alike, from the standpoint of spiritual oneness, and thus to give a strong foundation to all kinds of social, political and religious movements of all countries and amongst all nations of the earth. You will notice that each of these ideals of Vedânta is not confined to any particular place, time or class of people, but it is universal in its aspect and as wide as the heavens over our head. Such is the grand, many-sided and all-embracing ideal of the Vedânta.

"One truth we learn from Vedânta is that the solution of a problem becomes easy when we understand the universal principle and the universal law under which it acts. As long as an event is isolated or single, it is a mystery to us; we do not understand it, we cannot explain it. As long as we think our life is an isolated something or as separate from the rest of the universe, so long the problem of life remains inexplicable. Therefore, the Vedânta explains our life by describing its relation to the universal life-principle which is expressing itself through various forms of nature. It says that our life is nothing but a symbol of eternal principle conditioned by time and space. The whole universe is an expression of one living Substance. There is no such thing as dead matter. When that life expresses or manifests through time and space, it appears in different forms which are all related to one another and also to the whole. That relation is like the relation of a part to another part and a part to the whole; all difference being a difference of degree and not of kind. So, our life being a part of the eternal life is eternal, and has not come out of nothing. * *

"Each of these manifested particles of that eternal life-principle is evolving from * * limited towards unlimited. In this process it has some definite purpose at each step. * * It has its aim. That aim * * may vary in particular manifestations under particular conditions still it is tending from less perfect (limited) towards perfection (unlimited). Consequently, the Vedânta points out that the aim of human life is perfection (Freedom from limitation).

> "* * As we approach nearer to perfection * * by experience we come to know that the best way of living is not to follow the dictates of a narrow, limited will but to obey the universal Will."

The Swâmi follows with an exquisite pattern—formula to all principled living: aim, continuity, and alignment—analysis of the Law to its sequence—essences and meanings that translate life into freedom instant and profound:

> "We start at first with a tiny, little, weak and thin thread of will, which grows stronger and stronger as we rise higher and higher in the scale of our life. Then gradually by passing through different stages of manifestations we gain more and more experience and begin to see how the thread of the individual will is connected with the universal Will, slowly understand their relation, and ultimately realize that our will which we have so long thought to be ours is not ours, but a part and parcel of that one Will which is moving the universe from minutest atom to the biggest solar system, and our bodies are nothing but so many small instruments through which that all-pervading Will is expressing itself."

Note how the Apostle declares first the aim of Vedânta, ONENESS: "The whole universe is an expression of one living Substance." Second, he states the idea of *continuity*—and that the sense of suffering stems from the habit of the mind to "isolate events"—and concludes his thesis with this admonition to align the individual will with the Cosmic Will—sequence and indentification. From his lecture on *Law of Compensation* which appears April 1905 in the *Vedânta Bulletin* consider this brief for the Law:

> "* * The law of compensation, law of causation, and the law of action and reaction, as well as the law of retribution, work together. They represent merely the different phases of nature's purpose in producing diverse phenomena, each opposing the other. For instance, heat is not only the effect and reaction, but a perfect compensation for the fuel that produces it; nothing more nor less. Heat pays for the fuel and fuel pays for the heat; there is neither debt nor profit anywhere but perfect balance."

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1. Cf. Abhedânanda: *Doctrine of Karma* (1944), p. 24.

All ideas of renunciation, fixations as of Karmic penalization and bondage of reincrnation fuse themselves into the immensity and immanence of the eternal Law of which we are parcel to cosmos and horizon. Law and its avocation, edict and its glory, and we who ride the rainbows did we but know!

The Swâmi was guest speaker at the Annual Festival of the Free Religions Association, held on the evening of May 27, 1898 at Parker Memorial Building. Dr. Lewis G. Janes in introducing the Swâmi said: "Something of the thought that came into the Transcendentalist movement, consciously or unconsciously, I am sure, came from the old home of our Aryan brothers in India, something indirectly through Germany, something directly, I know not how, into the heart and mind of Emerson. It gives me great pleasure to welcome our brother from India, Swâmi Abhedânanda." The Swâmi spoke on Transcendentalism.

Dr. Janes was Director of the Cambridge Conferences and was associated with the liberal transcendentalist trend throughout the East, and we find him lending encouragement to the growing philosophical Renascence, giving virogous support and friendship to the Vedânta Movement. Dr. Lewis G. Janes, M.A., was "an eminent scholar and lecturer of science, ethics and religion. * * his learning combined with remarkable liberality of religious views and strong character" made him a leader of thought among the progressive movements. He gave generously of his influence and wide acquaintance extending to the young Abhedânanda many opportunities through his own contact with the broader fellowships from which often stemmed invitations to platform and conference both in New York City and New England.[1]

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[1] Dr. Janes died on September 5, 1901 at Brooklyn.

The Swâmi lectured before the Outlook Club in Lynn, Massachusetts, a Woman's Club, and it was at this time he corrected the many errors popularly entertained about the position of women in India. Note how the Apostle gives to the intellectuals and the elite those matters so needing correctives knowing that once the educated peoples are informed that knowledge finds its way to the masses. One among these strange tales brought back by early missionaries, to induce funds for their labours in foreign fields and to increase Gospel fervour, was that particularly obnoxious to the Indians, is that Hindu women are said to throw their infants to the crocodiles in the Ganges. The Swâmi explained that "he has walked on foot along the Ganges for nearly fifteen hundred miles, mingling freely with Hindus of all classes and castes but never heard of mothers feeding the crocodiles with their babes. Indeed it is now declared that crocodiles do not frequent the Ganges." He continues then with an outline of Vedânta: "This religion of Vedânta is not confined to any particular book. It includes all scriptures and all the teachings of all great prophets who flourished at different times, in different countries. It is based on science, philosophy and logic. It harmonizes with the ultimate conclusions of modern science. As truth is the goal of all science and philosophy, so the same Truth is the goal of Vedânta. Modern science has discovered nothing that opposes the conclusions of the Vedânta philosophy. The Vedânta is a philosophy and a religion at the same time. It recognizes each of the different stages, such as dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and monistic. In short, it is the Universal religion. It embraces Christianity and points out its fundamental basis. It recognizes Jesus as the Son of God.

"Professor Max Müller says: 'Vedanta is the most sublime of all phisolosophies, and the most comforting of all religions. It has room for almost every religion; nay, it embraces them all.' "

In Waltham, Massachusetts, the Swâmi gave his lecture on *The Motherhood of God,* a lecture eliciting high compliments from a Mr. Charles Malloy, confrere of our own beloved transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. This lecture has always been much in demand seeming to hold a very real appeal to the women of the West. Before the conferences for the 'Comparative Study of Religions' held in Cambridge, the Swâmi lectured on *Râmakrishna, a Real Mahâtman.* On the programme with the Swâmi was Professor Lanmann who held at the time the chair in Sanskrit at Harvard University. His subject was *Spirituality of the Hindus.* At a reception sponsored at the Vendome Hotel by the Channing Club of Boston where there were present many representative scholars and distinguished guests, the Swâmi, although not on the programme was requested to make an address. The daughter of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the poet was among those present. Before the Liberal Congress of Religions in Boston the Swâmi lectured on *The Religious Ideals of the Hindus* and at the close of his half hour's address he was importuned to continue by the interested audience. Mr. Heber Newton, one of America's nationally known ministers, addressed this Congress. Mr. Newton was rector of All Soul's Episcopal Church in New York City and in his subject, *Symbols of Religion* he used historical evidence to show that the use of the cross as a religious symbol in India antedated the Christian period. Dr. Newton spoke also of the spirituality and learning of the Hindus. The Swâmi spent that evening with Professor Lanmann who was much interested in the work of the Swâmis in America. He asked many questions of the Swâmi regarding the work and spread of the Vedânta teachings in this country. President Charles Eliot of Harvard University, whom the Swâmi met at the reception, "tendered the Congress of Religions in the

Phillips Brooks House * * conversed with the Swâmi upon the * * condition of India in regard more particularly to education. * * inquiring also as to the cause of famine.

"On April 29th, the Swâmi attended a lecture on Nietzsche, the German philosopher given by Professor Royce. After the lecture he (Swâmi) was asked to make some remarks on the subject. He * * gave a short talk contrasting the philosophy of Nietzsche with the teachings of Vedânta."

It should be interesting to the student of American thought to note that at the time the 'Boston Congress of Religions' was in session an Ecumenical Conference was holding forth in New York City—"two bodies (more) diametrically oppossed could not have been found". Interesting too to read side by side in the columns of the daily press throughout the nation narrow accounts of the missioner which loomed bold beside the broad tenets of the philosopher, savant and transcendentalist declaring all men brothers and making no distinction in race, colour, creed or sect. Strange indeed the venues of a national thinking as India through her Great Ones strengthened and moulded the new trends of America's hard—won freedom to think—freedom from old religious mores with their burden of legend and superstition.

I trust I have not overtaxed the reader's patience with these few chapters on the details and annals of some of the activities of the early society interests, the lectureships and the speaking tours and the general response of the liberal and thinking sectors of the East. In the New England States, especially, audiences were representative of the ablest minds in America; many were followers of Emerson whom they called the Sage of Concord. Emerson's transcendentalism leaned toward an austere philosophy and stemmed from the quality of character. Yet there was somewhat of the orthodox Quaker's primary text deriving all authority from the

Spirit of the Holy Ghost which gave to Emerson's writings, poetry especially—kinship with the *Gitâ* as witness this oft-quoted verse from his poem BRAHMA:

> *"If the red slayer thinks he slays,*
> *Or if the slain thinks he is slain,*
> *They know not well the subtle ways*
> *I keep, and pass, and turn again."*

The Unitarians were long regarded as non-churchmen and were for years barred from any and all collective Christian church activities. Emerson began life as a Unitarian minister but found even these society strictures too confining. Dr. Emerson renounced the pulpit for the platform and because America's most outstanding lecturer. His work bridged somewhat the cleavage between materialism and orthodoxy. For himself he knew, but he had not the philosophy nor the technics (*Yogas*) to align man to those sublime heights of his own Olympus. The *whys* and the *wherefores* were to come from the heart and vision of an East Idian mystic. The persistence of a lad's *will to know* became the Apostle to the Doctors and gave America a working synthesis. He related the law of relativity to the Infinite. Made possible the apparent and the Reality to the mind and reason of all learning. The Society's Honour roster grew—upon it were enrolled such names as that of Professor Lanmann, the Reverand Heber Newton, and Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, Dr. Lewis G. Janes. Others especially of the Unitarian school of thinking such as Reverand Minot Savage and Dr. Robert Collyer were becoming interested definitely along the lines of transcendentalism. Immanence was not yet for the Unitarian.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GREEN ACRE SEMINAR

In August 1898, Swâmi Abhedânanda lectured at Green Acre in Maine. "This was a popular Summer School for the study of things pertaining to a higher life". It was open to all men and women who were seeking a comparative philosophy and religion, regardless of race or creed or colour. Thomas Jefferson, the great actor, was there that summer; Persians and Hindus and many of talent and profession whose leanings were towards a universal democracy of the mind. None were denied—all true learning was welcome. The Green Acre Seminar three of the Great Swâmis in turn lectured was organized in 1894 and was also known as the Green Acre Conferences. It was founded by the unconquerable spirit and efforts of an envisioned woman, Miss Sarah Farmer, in the year following Swâmi Vivekânanda's appearance at the 'World Parliament of Religions' held in that memorable year of 1893 at Chicago. That year in which the highest award in philosophy and religion was given to a simple Indian monk wearing the yellow robe of his Brotherhood who represented, before a Congress of Western opinion for the first time in history, the Universal teachings of Vedânta.

So simple, so gentle in appearance this *Sannyâsin* scholar yet so impressive the words of his discourse that those who had stoned him in the streets of Chicago read in bewilderment in the morning papers the graphic accounts of a "Unity that makes all men one". These events have long since passed into the records. The Press of America recounted in glowing terms the story of those discourses. They are retold again and again in the life of Vivekânanda by his admirers and his devotees. This is the life-story of Abhedânanda and the writer means that not unnecessarily shall his work be overshadowed by the First Apostle whose brilliance shed, as it were, a spell throughout thinking America by that impact of Indian synthesis—a least common denominator to a world ravaged by cults and creeds.

It was the long years of Abhedânanda's ceaseless labours that graved upon the consciousness of a people the tenets of law and order, a new continence in an era of wild sectarian conflict and materialism. It was under Swâmi Abhedânanda's "clear and forcible exposition of Vedânta" that our national thinking came of age.

Of the Green Acre School, Swâmi Abhedânanda writes in *Mind*:[1]

> "Since the time of their inauguration the liberalizing and unsectarian spiritual teachings of the Vedânta philosophy have taken a prominent part in shaping the ideals of the Green Acre Movement. The teachers of this philosophy have come from India and have represented it almost every year. These teachers are known as 'Swâmi' a word meaning spiritual teachers or masters. Of these the first was Swâmi Vivekânanda, the Hindu *Sannyâsin* or monk who represented the Hindu philosophy before the World's Fair Parliament of Religions. He was the first Hindu teacher who came to America and explained the lofty ideals of the Vedânta through his wonderful eloquence, oratorical and magnetic personality.'
>
> "In 1896, his successor, Swâmi Sâradânanda, came to Green Acre and taught Vedânta for two successive seasons. By his charming manners and unselfish love for humanity he succeeded in making a deep impression as to the practical results of Vedânta teachings, upon the minds of almost all who met him personally or heard his discourses under the 'Swâmi's Pine' in the woods.
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> "In 1898 Swâmi Sâradânanda was followed at Green Acre by the writer of the present article. During that season he gave one lecture on 'Science and Religion', in the large tent before the general audience and four

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[1] Reprinted in *Prabuddha Bhârata*, December 1899, p. 186.

> lectures before the Monsalvat School of Comparative Religion, established and conducted at Green Acre by Dr. Lewis G. Janes."

In the words of James Martineau: "I looked for ultimate unity, not from the World's coming round to me while I stand still, but from a converging movement of thought, affecting all faithful men, toward a centre of repose as yet invisible." Thus Horatio W. Dresser introduces the reader to his own impressions about Green Acre. "Such a movement is the Green Acre Lectureship, established in 1894 on the banks of the Piscataqua, in Maine, with the express purpose of bringing together all who are looking earnestly toward the new day which is surely breaking over the entire world, and who are ready to contribute their best thought, serve and be served. The two months spent there in camp, at the Inn, or at some farm house near by, have been the turning point in life for many people, and many return year after year because of the great help they receive in daily living. It seems like home to them. It is easy to be good while there, for the atmosphere is wonderfully inspiring".[1]

I have given some space to Green Acre as this experiment in a resident Seminar for the congregation of all savants and schools of philosophy was the immediate result of Indian culture and thought upon the West, and since the Swâmis attended these conferences each season emphasis was given to the growing demand and need for similar schools, Peace Retreats and Ashrams in America.

The Swâmi's work was becoming known. The lecturing tours following the close of the New York season allowed little time or opportunity for vacation or rest. Itineraries are change, they are not necessarily relaxation and these men of India work unceasingly whether at home or travelling.

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1. Horatio W. Dresser, in *Prabuddha Bhârata*, December 1899, p. 188.

Even on shipboard there is demand for lecture. It is as though once a *Sannyâsin* they do not teach a message, but are rather a message embodied.

In these records of the Society's activities, records of events long before my own association with the Vedânta Society which did not take place until 1907, I am tempted for its human interest and colour to insert the following reprint of an account which appeared in the *New York Herald* of Sunday, March 4, 1900. The account was accompanied by a beautiful photograph of "the Swâmi Abhedânanda and some of his youthful pupils in Oriental Philosophy." The photograph I am unable to reproduce.

Social gatherings were held, often weekly, during these years to bring the students into better understanding and the Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas were celebrated as regularly as were the Indian sacred festivals commemorating the birthdays of Srî Râmakrishna, Buddha and others. Also there was a Young People's Yoga Association inaugurated in January of 1900. All this is "tangible proof of the excellent work the Swâmi Abhedânanda has been doing", comments the *Prabuddha Bhârata.*

"NEW YORK'S JUVENILS VEDANTISTS"

"LITTLE ONES WHO ARE LEARNING BRAHMINISM"

(from the *New York Herald* of Sunday, March 4, 1900, and reprinted in the *Prabuddha Bhârata,* May, 1900.)

"Not the least among the extraordinary things of these times is the realization that India, the land of the heathen and benighted, according to popular impressions among our people, is sending missionaries of the Hindoo religion into the very core and heart of our Western civilization. Here in New York a few picturesque monks of the Brâhmin faith have banded together a society for the propaganda of their religion and philosophy, which is taking such deep root and spreading so rapidly that children in this city are being reared and trained in the faith of Brahma, and are sent every week to sit at the feet of the Eastern Mahâtmâ to learn wisdom and grace.

"Every Saturday afternoon a class of young boys and girls gathers together in the rooms of the Vedânta Society in East Fifty-fifth Street, to speak an hour or so with the Swâmi Abhedânanda and drink in the teachings of the Hindoo philosophy, which is expounded to them in the most fascinating way. The young people come in with beaming, expectant faces, and draw their chairs around the handsome Oriental figure of the Swâmi, who sits in the circle wearing a robe of rich red, and holding in his hand an ancient Sanskrit book—the *Hitopadesha*, or book of 'good counsels.' This book is one of the oldest pieces of literature in the world. It dates back to the thirteenth century B.C. and is the source of all of our fables of animals, our tales and fairy stories.

"The life and teachings of Jesus enter largely into the text of the Vedânta philosophy, and never a lesson goes by but that some saying of Jesus Christ's or some incident of his life is used to illustrate a moral lesson or point a principle.

"The Swâmi selects a story every Saturday afternoon from the *Hitopadesha* and tells it to the children. The stories are all about kings and queens and animals who converse freely together upon subjects of astounding range for young minds, but the children sit in rapt attention eager for every word. Woven into the glittering fabric of wonder and imagination are all the doctrines of the Vedas—such ideas as reincarnation, *Karma* and *Yoga*, with bits of wit, wisdom and good advice, which will linger, doubtless, in these young minds during all their lives.

"The Swâmi ends the story, and then follows a little talk about it, and each child is asked to repeat the story in his own way and to tell the moral lessons and reflections which it has given him. It is wonderful to see how much of the real meaning of the tales makes its way into their heads and how eager they are for more.

"A pholosophy which calms and embraces all religions is a little wide for the minds of most grown folk, but these young ones seem to take to it with avidity.

"One little boy in the class is so earnest and devout that he sacrifices the whole of his weekly holiday to glean the wisdom

> dispensed by the Swâmi, and early Saturday morning he makes his way from Brooklyn and comes to the rooms of the Vedânta Society, where he is allowed to listen to the class of grown up students who are studying the *Upanishads* with Swâmi Abhedânanda.
>
> "When the children's class was first formed the Mammas and Aunts of the little ones were allowed to come in with the children, but it soon became evident that the older folk were too eager to take part in the lessons and absorb the attention of the Swâmi, so that the little ones had no chance. Now all grown folks are excluded, and the Swâmi and the children have things all their own way".

"In July of 1900 Swâmi Abhedânanda left the City with Dr. H. C. Parker of Columbia University and acting President of the Vedânta Society" for a trip into the Adirondacks where they tramped the hills and mountains for two weeks. At the expiration of this brief vacation the Swâmi addressed the Spiritualist Camp Meeting in Chesterfield, Indiana—an audience "numbering about seven thousand people * * enthusiastic listeners." The Swâmi lectured for an hour and a half on *The Religious Ideas of the Hindus* and on *Immortality* and *Reincarnation*. He again visited Green Acre in New England, and lectured before the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston meeting again with his many old friends and admirers. In the latter part of September "he spoke before the Metaphysical Convention on the *Universality of Vedânta.* This Convention was a meeting of the Mental Scientists, Mental Healers, Faith Healers and Divine Healers; in this talk he showed how the Vedânta philosophy includes all the ideas which these healers use in the branch known as Râja Yoga." "On November seventh * * he represented the Hindu and Sanskrit scholars of India paying tribute to the memory of Professor F. Max Müller at a public meeting held in Columbia University. * * under the auspices of the Philosophical and Philological departments; he spoke on behalf of India" and of the great respect in which this scholar is held; spoke of his service to the West in so faithfully presenting the philosophies of the East, mentioning among his later works *The Life and Sayings of Srî Râmakrishna.*

In December 1900 the Swâmi spoke on invitation before the Council of Jewish Women at Temple Israel in New York. They were to discuss the *Historical Significance of the Jewish Festivals,* with special reference to Chanukah. He delivered an address on *The Festivals of the Ancient Jews,* pointing out the similarity existing between them and the ancient Hindu festivals, also (spoke of the similarity) between the laws of Moses and the laws of Manu." I mention these programmes somewhat at length to show the catholicity and scope of his work from the very beginning of his ministry; also to show how the representative schools of religion and philosophy were attracted to and found in Monism and through the Vedânta teachings a unity and brotherhood their sectarianism had missed. On the Saturday before Christmas he gathered his Sunday School children about a "wonderful Christmas tree". The records state: "Laughter and cries of delight were heard; they sang songs, played and recited and altogether had a glorious time. Swâmi Abhedânanda was * * merry and happy as any child, and before the gifts were distributed gave them a beautiful little talk touching on the origin of Christmas." With an address entitled the *Religious Need of the Twentieth Century* on the first Sunday of January 1901 he ushered in the New Year's work, stressing the trends and the earnestness of a people's search. The *New York Sun* printed in its columns the following survey of the lecture:

A TWENTIETH CENTURY RELIGION WITH NO SCHEME OF SALVATION, NO NEED OF HEAVEN, NO FEAR OF HELL.

"The Swâmi Abhedânanda lectured in the Carnegie Lyceum yesterday afternoon on the *Religious Need of the Twentieth Century.* He spoke of tuning the molecules of the brain cells

> to harmonize with the vibrations of the Cosmic Mind, and so gaining power, and he said that the mind and matter were not dual entities, but the subjective and objective manifestations of the unknown."
>
> "The twentieth century needs a religion", he said, "with no scheme for salvation, no need for heaven or hell, no fear of eternal punishment. The twentieth century needs a religion free from sacerdotal institutions and free from all books, scriptures and personalities. The twentieth century needs a religion with a concept of God, not personal, not impersonal but beyond both, a God whose supreme aspect will harmonize with the ultimate Reality of the universe. The twentieth century religion must accept the ultimate conclusions of all the philosophies of the world."

One of the New York correspondents to the *Prabuddha Bhârata* of May 1901 writes:

> "Among the significant blessings ushered in with the dawn of the new century, is the evidence of a firmer foothold of the Vedânta philosophy in the lives of many Western students. We feel that it is wholly due to Swâmi Abhedânanda's persistence and untiring faithfulness, that so much has been accomplished. * * The inhabitants of a great cosmopolitan city like New York are restless—moving hither and thither anxiously seeking they know not what * * tremendously difficult * * the task of reaching the mind, the heart, or even the ear for any length of time, but the power of the Swâmi is great and each succeeding lecture finds him making a larger application and attracting greater numbers. The attention with which they listen * * is often remarked,—how clearly every word reaches the most distant part of the hall, with no apparent effort on the part of the speaker, a pleasing contrast to the excited manner employed by many of our pulpit orators, who resort to much noise and gesticulation in their efforts to convince their hearers of certain truths. The Swâmi's power to hold their absorbed attention lies in the simplicity and directness with which he unfolds the Divine message * *.
>
> "The lectures *How to Be a Yogi* and *The Effects of Breathing Exercises* drew large audiences impressing many with a desire to become members of the Vedânta Society and receive the Swâmi's instructions in Yoga. Besides the more serious who applied, came a number of excitable enthusiasts of a day,

beseeching the Swâmi to give them "quick" lessons in breathing and in Yoga, thereby making them eternally fit. But the Swâmi with far-seeing wisdom, first advised serious consideration on their part, insisting upon a written application for membership to the Society, and detailed reason for wishing to join the steadfast ones, kindly pointing out to them the necessity of thoroughly understanding the serious nature and deep meaning of the exercises."

On another occasion:

"The Swâmi excelled himself in a discourse on *My Master*, opening, even to those who had heard before, a fuller realization of the way leading to Godconsciousness. He told to this saintly example who lived upon the earth such a short time ago, making the Christ teachings more clear and vital to all. Those to whom the possibility of a divine life upon the earth in this present material age was quite new and astonishing, felt a throb of wonder, an eager desire to understand and grasp more fully the meaning of Truth and Freedom; verily it must imply a greater renunciation of this small being in order to become conscious of the Self. All felt with reverence and love and thankful hearts, the inestimable blessing of listening to these teachings from one who had long known the divine atmosphere of the Master."

Prabuddha Bhârata—September 1901, reprinted from *San Francisco Chronicle,* August 1, 1901:

"Swâmi Abhedânanda who arrived here on Monday from New York was the guest of honour at a reception given last evening at the residence of Dr. M. H. Logan.

"The Swâmi is a dignified intellectual looking East Indian. He has dark—hair, eyes and complexion suggesting a handsomely chiseled piece of bronze. He speaks English fluently, and his thoughts as he gives them utterance, are so framed as to form an axiom. Sentence after sentence being epigrammatic. 'Every thing comes in time; exercise patience', was the philosophical way he replied last evening to an apologetical request to submit to a somewhat trying Occidental custom. The Vedânta Society was well represented at the reception and in its members the Swâmi had eager Western disciples, willing to cherish every thought out of India which fell from his lips.

The Vedânta Society was organized here about a year ago by Swâmi Vivekânanda. Then came Swâmi Turiyânanda who gave some lectures and lessons, and then established the retreat at Mount Hamilton, the Shânti Ashrama Retreat, where the disciples of the Swâmis go regularly for rest and study.

"Dr. Logan's home last evening was bright with flowers, especially the supper room on the lower floor, which, under regular circumstances is used for the Thursday evening assemblies of the Vedânta Society. Here, before the dinner, Dr. Logan formally welcomed the Swâmi to the City, and the East Indian responded.

"The reception committee, which arranged the pleasant evening consisted of Dr. Logan, President of the Vedânta Society; C. E. Peterson, Vice-president; A. S. Wollberg, Secretary; Mrs. A. S. Wollberg, Mrs. C. E. Peterson, and Mrs. Plum of Oakland. Assisting the committee were Miss Beckham, Mrs. F. Hood and Miss Lutz."

Prabuddha Bhârata—October 1901—Reprinted from the *San Jose Herald*:

"A very distinguished Hindu teacher, writer and philosopher, Swâmi Abhedânanda, is a guest at Hotel Vendome for a few days. His present home is in New York City, where there is an organization of students of the Hindu philosophy known as Vedânta.

"When seen by a Herald reporter, last evening, the Swâmi (teacher or professor in English) explained that he was visiting California, lecturing or speaking to assemblages when requested and seeing sights of our states. He has just returned from San Antonio valley beyond Mt. Hamilton, where he spent two weeks at Shânti Ashrama (Peace Retreat) in charge of Swâmi Turiyânanda, a friend and fellow disciple of his. This "retreat" is occupied at present by some fourteen students, American and English under the instruction of Swâmi Turiyânanda. The property upon which it is located, 160 acres, was donated for this purpose by Miss Minnie Boock, who became a student of Swâmi Abhedânanda while he was in the United States.

"Swâmi Abhedânanda is a gentleman of pleasing address, modest and simple in manners, speaking English perfectly, and expressing himself in the language of culture and education. He is familiar with the Bible, as also our best literature. He is the author of several works in English upon Hinduism.

"The Swâmi says there are many students of Hindu philosophy in the United States, particularly in New York and San Francisco. He goes from here to Los Angeles, after visiting Yosemite and the Mariposa Big Trees."

Appearing in the *Prabuddha Bhârata* for January 1902 the New York correspondent over the initials L. G. contributes the following letters too forthright a summary of the national responsiveness to this Apostle of Monism to pass unrecorded:

> "To the Editor, *Prabuddha Bhârata*, January 1902
> "Dear Sir,
>
> "Active work in the Vedânta Society began on the 1st of November last with the resuming of classes and the weekly lectures, and never since its foundation has it opened a season so auspiciously. It is, indeed, as if it had suddenly emerged from its period of probation and had risen to the rank of an established institution in the community. Clergymen of such authority and prominence as Bishop Potter are not only recognizing its existences, but are citing long passages from its publications—such as the Swâmi Abhedânanda's lecture on *Woman's place in Hindu Religion*—in order to correct the false impressions which Christian Missionaries have circulated concerning India and its religious beliefs; while applications for membership are coming from sources hitherto untouched by the Vedânta teaching.
>
> "This awakening of interest on the part of the general public, futhermore, finds its full counterpart within the Society itself. The increase in earnestness,—the desire to aid in the work manifested by the older students—has given an impetus to it such as none dared hope for so soon; and has encouraged the Swâmi to attempt a course of instruction in Jñâna Yoga, which would have seemed far beyond the comprehension of his listeners six months ago. Now, however, although the list of subjects for November and December,—*Religion of Vedânta, Search after Truth, What is Immortality? Worship of God as the Mother, Soul and God, Who Creates Evil? What is Reincarnation?, The Attributes of God, Unity in Variety,*— calls for the most abstract expositions of higher Truth, the

large audiences which gather each week in Carnegie Lyceum follow with wrapt attention every word which the Swâmi utters, while the Society rooms on Tuesday evenings are filled to the doors with a public equally eager to hear him expound that portion of the *Upanishads* known to English speaking people through Eiwin Arnold's translation, as *The Secret of Death.*

"He himself has come back * * with an unusually large store of force and vitality—thanks to a three months' journey to the Pacific Coast, during which he was able for the first time to perceive how far his field of influence extends. At every turn, indeed, he met well-wishers and friends—those who had heard him lecture, or who had read his pamphlets, and who were more than anxious to render him any service within their power. Unable to resist their urgent solicitations, he was occasionally prevailed upon to give a talk on Vedânta; and at the invitation of Professor Howison, Professor of Philosophy in the University of California, he delivered a lecture before the faculty and students of that institution. So far as he could, hoever, he held to his resolution to take a complete rest and do no public speaking.

"He returned to New York at the beginning of October and had the pleasure of finding the Society house entirely renovated and made for the first time a really suitable home for the work. Al the rented furniture had been removed, the walls rehung, the floors recarpeted, and the class-room where the daily meditation is held, converted into a * * chapel.

"With such bettered outward conditions and such inward zeal on the part of the students, the present year promises to be richer in results than any of the seven which have preceded it.—L. G.

New York, 21*st November* 1901."

Early in the New Year over the same initials the New York Correspondent against writes:

"To the Editor of the *Prabuddha Bhârata*

"Sir,

"The annual celebration of the birthday of our Master Srî Râmakrishna promises to accomplish a double mission, in that it must not only deepen and expand the spiritual life of every one who takes part in it, but even more must with every year level and break down all barriers between the East and the West. The very fact that at the same moment in the four quarters of the globe on that feast day his followers are kneeling at his shrine, sending out thoughts of grateful worship towards him, and of affectionate good will towards one another, is enough to knit and strengthen tenfold with each recurring anniversary the bonds of fellowship which have established in recent years through the work of Vedânta. It is especially meet, therefore, that at this sacred season greetings should go from us to you, and that you should learn something of the way in which we, the most distant of all the disciples, observed the festival.

"Since it was not possible for us to hold a continuous service throughout the twenty-four hours, as is customary with you, we began our celebration on Tuesday evening with a lecture by Swâmi Abhedânanda on the life of the Master. Although it was intended to be merely a simple, informal recital of the chief events of that holy life as the Swâmi had known them, either through the Master's words or through his daily contact with him, the strong emotion which stirred him as told of them once again, infused such fire and vividness into the narrative that more than once the audience were moved to tears; and the impression left was so profound that all came with hearts still better prepared for the more solemn portion of the celebration on Wednesday morning.

"Although there was less effort made to gather in a large number than to bring together those who having the habit of meditation might really profit by the service, when the doors of the meditation room were thrown open at eleven o'clock, the Swâmi found the library crowded with earnest worshippers who had brought with them not only lavish offerings of fruit and flowers, but in many instances, also generous contributions to Râmakrishna's work in India. An altar had been erected on the platform under the star, where the Swâmi's chair usually stands, and on this was placed the picture of the Master, wreathed in flowers while all about were massed baskets of fruit, bunches of cut flowers or pots of blooming plants. When the incense had been lighted, the Swâmi took his place on a tiger-skin to the left of the altar, those who preferred to do so sat on the floor around him while the majority occupied the chairs behind. The service lasted for an hour and a half and consisted of meditation, chanting, and occasional inspiring words from the Swâmi, in which loving reference was also made to Sâradâ Devî, the devoted wife of Râmakrishna.

> "At the close of the final meditation the fruit was passed, and all those who did not care, like the Swâmi, to prolong their fast until evening, partook of it. The Swâmi then gave a flower to each one present and with this the celebration ended. —L.G.
>
> New York, March 13th, 1902."

And as early as 1898 a *Bramachârin* writes gratefully of the Swâmi's presentation of the *Yoga Sutras* and of how he reformed those fine abstractions into simpler phrasing nearer to a student's understanding:

> "The secret lies in the Swâmi's method of teaching. The Swâmi expounds the teaching of the Vedânta and presents the Oriental ideals before the minds of the student through * * expressions which are in perfect harmony with the concepts and ideas they already possess. Consequently, they seem quite attractive and easy to comprehend. After this explanation the Swâmi answers with great patience and kindness the many questions which the students ask freely.
>
> "Then he teaches how to concentrate the mind on the *Atman* and how to meditate. The meditation ends with a very beautiful prayer, which the Swâmi chants in Sanskrit first and translates it into English, and when the benediction of peace is uttered the whole mental atmosphere * * seems to be filled for the time being, with peace rest and tranquillity."—A *Brahmachârin*, New York, December 29, 1898.

The care with which the Swâmi nurtured in his students those subliminals to be attained through worship and the softer approaches was always uppermost in these celebrations of the Holy Ones. On such occasions he gave graciously, shared generously of his own early living and contactual experiences with those privileged to be present. Fortunate indeed are they who could through worship enter these revelations of true saintliness.

The Pacific Vedântin for April, 1902, comments under the heading *New York Notes*:

> "Recent news from there assures that the 'Great Movement' was never more prosperous in New York than now. The best minds are taking profound interests in it."

CHAPTER NINE

The year 1905 was a year of significance to the Society. In the current May issue of the *Prabuddha Bhârata* we find the following lines contributed by Mrs. Emily Palmer Cape in a report on the celebration of Vivekânanda Day in which she speaks of the growth of Vedânta in New York City:

> "When one looks at what has been accomplished in the comparatively short time which our noble teacher Swâmi Abhedânanda has worked and struggled for, here in New York City, it makes us feel that as time goes on we shall each Vivekânanda Day meet together and realize more keenly the magnificent gift he brought to the West from the East."

It was on November 13th that the Swâmi opened his course of lectures before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Association Hall before an audience of several hundred people who listened, so run the records, "with close attention to the Swâmi's learned and comprehensive exposition of *The Prevailing Philosophy of Today*". Comprising the series were: *The Religion of India Today; The Social Status of the Indian People*: *Their System of Castes; The Political Institutions of India; Education in India; The Influence of India on Western Civilization and the Influence of the Western Civilization on India.*

When this series of lectures was brought out by the Society in book form under the title *India and Her People* another lecture *Woman's Place in Hindu Religion* was added to the contents, making this work one of the most authoritative and concisely complete histories of India in circulation in the West. Delivered as the lectures were before the Institute gave them their first reception to a small informed audience of thoughtful men and women. They were mostly students steming from other schools and universities, supplementing with outstanding programmes, their own specialized cultures. Many were post-graduates or students at large doing independent research. To lecture under the auspices of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences at all was to give a scholar secure standing and prestige. Nothing to do with the general public such as speaking before popular and mixed audiences however large. This was an audience of professionals, critics, and serious students. This was acceptance, this was to arrive!

In the opening lecture of this series before the Institute, *The Prevailing Philosophy of Today,* the Swâmi said:

> "India has always been the fountain-head of systems of philosophy. * * In 200. B.C. philosophers' conventions were held under the auspices of the monarchs and kings, priests, commanders, merchants and educated women of the higher class, all took part. These ancient philosophers discovered the laws of thought and of the universe. Their minds were absolutely free from limitations of creed and dogma. The toleration of the Hindus towards all forms of truth was said to be unrivalled in other parts of the world. * * Even these earliest philosophers had worked out their theory of the laws and processes of evolution in form to correspond with the modern idea."

And in the fifth lecture of this same series, *Education in India* the Swâmi sketched the intellectual conditions of India from its earliest history to modern times, describing the four periods, the ancient or pre-Buddhistic to the sixth century A.D.; the Mohammedan and the British and during the sway of these cultures he gave a detailed description of these systems upon the national Indian, social and educational standards. In the final lecture of this series the Swâmi traces the dawn of civilization breaking on the horizons of India and from there spreading to Greece, Rome, Arabia, Persia, etc., and delineates the influence of India on Western civilization—Western civilization on India and after describing the "crippling effects of England's governmental policies in India, the set-backs suffered through British rule upon Indian culture he acknowledges that British rule had at the same time proved beneficial in breaking the rigidities of caste rule, in freeing the people from priestcraft, and in giving the blessings of scientific education to the masses."

This course of lectures was followed several years later by another series on the *Lives of the Great Saviours.* These lectures gave India her unquestioned place among the Western nations. Heretofore little was generally known of India even in the socalled educated circles in the West—nothing authentic of her literature or history, her philosophy, politics or social status. To speak of India outside the Society House and to other than the Vedânta following or to informed scholars was to raise questions of mysticism, magic, glamour and marvellous wealth and Eastern charm; while to speak of India to those of strong church affiliations "heathenism" and "pagan worship" was the prompt and stubborn reaction. Some may recall as of recent press account and garbled fact the sorry trail left by that *Mother India* of Katharyn Mayo smearing the popular consciousness with its backwash of crooked thinking.

Since India, thanks to the labour and reform of those early pioneer Swâmis, had long found her niche, historically and philosophically among the thinking classes of every nation little lasting harm came from the Mayo book. And thanks again to this early forerunner of Time's onward march Swâmi Abhedânanda who could foresee historical trends and give direction to the decades forming. When a few minds in the upper levels of a nation's thinking are correctly informed and men of intellectual integrity and education set the stations as it were, the multitude become literate as a matter of course.

The Swâmi could wait. His the patience of the ages. Sometimes I wonder does India herself realize what she to this day owes of her spirit of unity in the United States, to the early pioneering of this grand Apostle of learning carving new friendships between nations. His daring, his courage and his inflexible purpose. For instance, before the Spiritualists' convention as recorded earlier, he named their spiritism ancestor-worship, which in reason and in truth it is, and they responded with an ovation to the man of India. To the Theosophists he scorned their Mahâtmâs, warning them against psychic figments of the brain, bodyless entities. Of the Christian Scientists he denuded their mysteries of healing declaring spiritual healing the gift of enlightened reason known for centuries in India. And before the Swedenborgians where he was guest speaker of the pastor of the Lexington Avenue Swedenborgian church at a dinner given by the New Church Club on January 22, 1900, he delivered a lecture and patiently explained the Vedânta tenets in answer to Dr. Smythe showing how the dualistic Swedenborgian conception was only the beginning of religion in Vedânta. For Vedânta includes the Swedenborgian conception as merely part of its universal teaching.

"Great interest", the report in the *Bulletin* goes on to say, "and admiration were manifested in the Swâmi's brilliant defence of his position", that day.

And before the New York Churchman's Association at the Hotel Vendome where he was guest of honour at a meeting held on March 6, 1905: "About forty prominent clergymen of New York and vicinity were present, and listened with close attention to the Swâmi's address on *The Relation of Soul to God.* The President of the Association was Rev. D. Parker Morgan, rector of the Church of the Heavenly Rest. He introduced the Swâmi, who spoke following the luncheon. At the close of the address one clergyman rose and said: "We have heard a profound exposition of the highest form of natural religion, but our religion of course is supernatural or revealed religion." To which the Swâmi replied in substance: "India is the home of all revealed religions. The idea of revelation first came from there. As to the distinction between natural and supernatural religion, that is purely arbitrary, depending entirely upon one's conception of nature. If that conception be narrow, then everything beyond the limit of that circle is accounted supernatural. Extend the circumference of the circle, however, and what was supernatural becomes natural. If, therefore, the conception of nature, as in Vedânta, is extended until it includes infinite space, then nothing remains outside and the natural has brought within its field the whole realm of the supernatural. Thus the natural religion of Vedânta includes not only the supernatural religion of Christianity but all sects and creeds".[1]

To show the clergy of the West were not alone in their pause for thought along the lines of East Indian philosophy and religion I will insert the following extract from the other side of the world:

> "Rev. T. E. Slater of the London Missionary Society, in a recent work, makes the following significant if somewhat reluctant, admission: 'Vedântic thought is so thoroughly Indian that the Indian Christianity of the future will of a necessity take a Vedântic colouring. Each nation of the world is the manifestation of a human want, and the demand of the Indian heart is for a fixed, unchangeable foundation on which the soul may rest amid the changes of this fleeting world. The God whom India seeks and must find is a God who abides in the heart, whose true home is the inmost soul of man. The West has to learn from the East and the East from the West. The questions raised by the Vedânta will have to pass into Christianity if the best minds of India are to embrace it; and the Church of the 'farther East' will doubtless contribute something to the thought of Christendom of the science of the soul and of the omnipenetrativeness and imminence of the Deity.'
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> "This is in line with the more unqualified tribute paid by a Scotch lawyer sent out by the British government to collect statistics on the religions of India. After spending twelve years at his task he frankly acknowledged that he could no more help believing in the fundamental doctrines of the Hindu faith, such as Reincarnation, and *Karma*, etc., than he could help believing in his own existence, for they seemed to him to offer the only rational explanation of the existing conditions of human life. Otherwise he declared that he found the

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1. *Vedanta Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. I, April 1905.

> average run of people in India much what they were in India or America, but 'when I found a real example of their spiritual teaching', he continued, 'it so far transcended in its purity and loftiness anything that Western minds could conceive of that it is futile to try to make them understand it'. And he added: 'If the quality of the milk is to be judged by the cream, then there can be no doubt that India has been vouchsafed a higher spiritual vision than other nations".[1]

How the Swâmi scanned the field and how he watched the trends, strengthened young cultures toward reason, positioned every centre of learning with which he came in contact; fearlessly turned men's thoughts to discrimination using comparative values until narrow horizons surrendered to those that were universal. Ever onward to that all-embracing unity which is Monism!

In February of the year of 1905 the Swâmi was invited by the Canadians to deliver a lecture before the Historical Club of the University of Toronto. While there he also made a public address in one of the large halls of the City. This lecture "was attended by many leading ministers and university professors." So keen was the interest roused by these lectures that he was importuned to remain and establish centres in Toronto.

This Monism, the dominating theme of the Apostle's ministry everywhere swept clean the camps of opposing schools. Wherever he found himself he left a wisdom and a security against sectarianism. Boldly he broke men's superstitions and limitations sending them back to origins and sources where knowledge is of the fundamentals and where race and creed and colour lose their holdings and become the thing in itself, *raison d'etre,* where object is lost in meaning, where relativity becomes unity—axis and terminal.

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[1] *Vedânta Bulletin,* Vol. I, No. 7, p. 107, October 1905.

In April of this year the *Vedânta Bulletin* issued its first number. The small organ gave new interest to the activities, served to acquaint all members and students with the schedules, programs and projects of the various centres. It also became a medium for the early publication of the lectures enabling those at a distance to read and share the teaching.

Following the Swâmi's lectures before the Brooklyn Institute there was request for a centre in Brooklyn and Swâmi Nirmalânanda opened and conducted a Yoga class there and held a weekly reception. This was the direct outgrowth of the lectures before the Institute and the two public lectures on *Vedânta Philosophy* and *Science of Breath* delivered before an audience in the Art Building in Montague Street by Swâmi Abhedânanda. Swâmi Nirmalânanda, who was well liked by everyone, took over the Tuesday evening lecture and class at the Society House when the Swâmi lectured on those evenings at the Institute.

On the evening of March 25, 1905, Professor Edward Howard Griggs delivered a lecture before the Society at its headquarters on the subject of *Plato*. Professor Griggs was one of the most popular lecturers in the Arts at the Institute. It was quite customary to invite the speaker to the Society House whenever topics were of kindred interest and informative. The report from the *Bulletin* follows:

> "The strong resemblance between the philosophy of Vedânta and the philosophy of Plato was brought out by Professor Edward Howard Griggs in a lecture delivered before the Society. Professor Griggs himself admitted that Plato's belief in the conquest of the senses as the only means of attaining true knowledge was pre-eminently oriental and non-Greek, but he did not call attention to the many other points in which the two philosophies meet. Plato's figure of the men chained in the cave is an allegorical presentation of the Vedânta doctrine of *Mâyâ*, while his other figure of the chariot is a favourite one with Vedic writers. How far this resemblance is coincident and how far derivative is a question of dispute among scholars, but one instance, at least, of direct communication between

> Greece and India at that time is accepted as authentic. A Hindu philosopher, we are told, came to Athens and had a discussion with Socrates, during which, in reply to Socrates' statement that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the life of man, the Indian philosopher asked the famous question: 'How can one understand things human without first understanding things divine?' It is search for the divine essence behind all phenomena which relates Plato so closely to the Indian teaching and which makes a student of the Platonic philosophy a natural follower of the more ancient system of Vedânta".[1]

Again, in Washington, D.C., as a result of two lectures delivered at different times a branch centre was opened in the Corcoran Building, Room 610. Miss L.W. Browne was secretary.

About this time an Advaita Ashrama or strictly Monistic school was being opened at Mâyâvati in the Himâlayas by a Captain Sevier, an English disciple of Vivekânanda; and the thoughts of the New York Society were likewise turning to the subject of a summer Home or Retreat.

Plans were discussed at a special meeting held June 1st, 1905:

> "It will be interesting to those who are not aware of it to learn that there is already a Vedânta Ashrama or Peace Retreat in this country. It is situated in Santa Clara County, San Antone Valley, California, about fifteen miles from the Lick Observatory, on a large tract of land donated by one of Swâmi Abhedânanda's students. The Retreat was opened in 1901 by Swâmi Turiyânanda who passed much of his time there during his stay in America. S. Trigunâtîta takes a few weeks rest there each autumn, and through the summer it is full of students eager to profit by a season of retirement from the world. It is now probable that another Swâmi will be brought over to assume direction of this special branch of the work. For the last three years Mr. Heyblom, originally a member of the Vedânta Society of New York, has remained at the Retreat summer and winter to care for

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[1] *Vedânta Bulletin*, May 1905, Vol. I, No. 2.

> it, but recently he was replaced by one of S. Trigunâtîta's disciples".[2]

According to a report appearing in the *Bulletin* for October 1905 the work is arousing interest everywhere:

> "Many have thought that the philosophy and religion of Vedânta, which thrives so vigorously in India, would not bear transplanting; those who know its teaching have never doubted that it was a world-plant of a perennial growth. Yet even to these the rapid spread of Vedânta, especially in America, is a source of constant surprise. From Texas to the northernmost borders of Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, there is not a state or province from which the Society has not received orders for its literature or inquiries concerning its teachings; and within the last five years 39,836 books and pamphlets on Vedânta have gone into circulation from its headquarters. The other day came a letter from Bohol Taghilaran, Philippine Islands, asking about the conditions of Society membership; and in the same week a large order of books was shipped to Alaska, etc".[3]

During the summer of 1905 Swâmi Abhedânanda together with Professor Herschel C. Parker of Columbia University and President of the New York Vedânta Society travelled from Alaska to Mexico. They,

> "climbed the high peaks of the Canadian Rockies, spent a few days at the Portland Fair, skirted the Northern coast of the northern Pacific and rode through the Grand Canyon of Arizona. On his way South he stopped in San Francisco and Los Angeles to visit the Swâmis in charge of the Societies there". "In Los Angeles S. Sacchidânanda arranged a reception for Swâmi Abhedânanda who delivered a short address to the members. He was impressed with their earnestness and general spirit of enthusiasm in the Society.
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> "Not in these centres alone, however, but everywhere did he find interest in Vedânta: At Lake Louise he was obliged to devote one whole evening to answering the questions of some fifty persons. At the urgent request of the passengers, he gave a lecture on the boat going to Alaska, as also on the

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[2] *Vedânta Bulletin*, April, 1905.

[3] *Vedânta Bulletin*, "Vedânta in America", pp. 108, 109, October 1905.

> Lake steamer from Toronto. And he was especially surprised to be accosted by name on the street in the City of Mexico by a Spanish gentleman who drew from his pocket copies of several of his lectures, among them the *Reincarnation*. This gentleman introduced him to a number of others who were devoted students of Vedânta and who were so eager to learn more that they begged the Swâmi to remain, long enough to deliver a course of lectures and establish a centre. They told him that Vedânta was spreading rapidly among the people of Mexico and that Swâmi Vivekânanda's *Râja Yoga* had been translated into Spanish by a scholar in Barcelona, Spain. From a visitor to the Society House it was learned that there is a group of earnest students of Vedânta in Vancouver, B.C."

The full season opened with the first of that outstanding series of lectures *The Great Saviours of the World*: Krishna, Buddha, Shintoism in Japan, Lâmâism in Tibet, Zoroaster and His Teachings, Laotze and His Teachings, Christ and His Teachings, Mahomet and His Teachings. These lectures aroused keen interest with their comparative values and single purpose expounding the unity underlying all religions.

> "In the * * lecture on Krishna first delivered about this time before the Society the Swâmi called especial attention to the marked similarity between the lives of Christ and Krishna, and showed how false were the claims of certain missionaries that the Hindus had borrowed the story of Krishna from the Bible since it could be proved historically that whether or not Krishna was a real personage, the legends and accounts of him far antidated the Christian era".[1]

The lines just quoted show how the students and those regularly attending the lectures were depending more and more upon the historical angle of his teaching. For the Swâmi never missed an opportunity to correct the popular misconceptions and false propaganda regarding *Mother India*. He was the erudite in history as he was the master in philosophy. He thought historically and he reasoned from eternities. His vision was from the Sublime—his thesis authoritative and established. One realized when listening to the lectures or when reading the many works to which his name gave signature that in philosophy his premises were irrefutable; in religion and psychology he taught from experience. As a scholar his mind was comparative, his knowledge invincible. In the world of letters he has taken his place as historian and philosopher among the representative thinkers, and has given to India her place in the academies of the West.

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[1] *Vedânta Bulletin*, December 1905, p. 139.

On January 15, 1906 the Swâmi lectured by invitation of Rabbi Grossman of the Jewish Temple Rudolph Sholem, on *Buddha and Buddhism* before the Young Men's and Women's Culture Society. In "his lecture he called attention to the fact that the Jews had never been persecuted by the Buddhists and later Rabbi Grossman corroborated this statement by saying that he had made an exhaustive study of the history of his race, and that while he had found many accounts of Jewish persecution by the Christians, the Mohammedans, the Zoroastrians, there was no instance recorded of the persecution of the Jews by the people of India". The report of this lecture in the *Vedânta Bulletin* for February 1906 says that much interest was shown by the Swâmi's words. And the *Bulletin* for April tells that a "Dr. J. C. Girdner * * delivered a lecture on *The Breathing Exercises from a Physician's Standpoint* before a large number of students and friends at the Vedânta Society. * * By means of a chart he explained the entire respiratory system and showed how * * health and strength were in exact ratio to our lung power."

No pains were spared by the Swâmi to establish from the scientific standpoint the teachings and practices of the East. The Swâmi fostered a co-operative spirit in his little band of students and under his tutelage many a speaker was encouraged and welcomed who had subjects of pertinent interest and information. He knew well the broadening influence that came from comparative research. He feared no science, no fact or knowledge, no reason or theology. Advaita Vedânta stood matchless before the thought and history of the world. That grand Monistic thesis which is motif to life and man. He its exponent, he the Apostle, feared no foe, no antagonist for Vedânta all-inclusive, all-embracing is source and substance to Truth.

The "Rev. R. Heber Newton, in a recent number of *Unity,* April 1906, in an address entitled *The Limits of Religious Fellowship* speaks of Srî Râmakrishna as a Son of God. Over three pages from this address were reprinted in the *Vedânta Bulletin,*[1] to show how both press and pulpit were recognizing this universal Renascence ushered in by the power of goodness of an unknown Indian Saint.

About this time Professor Franklin W. Hooper, Director of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences was elected an Honorary member of the Vedânta Society.[2]

On Sunday evening, April 8 "the 2450th Anniversary celebration of the Festival of Mercy to commemorate the birth of Buddha was held in the Society House, the Swâmi having offered the rooms to the Buddhist Association of America for the ceremony. More than two hundred people were present, a good proportion Japanese".[3]

Paul Carus, Editor of *Open Court,* speaking of Mr. Charles Johnson, well known Theosophist writing in the *Open Court*:

> "I agree with him (Mr. Johnson) that we Western people ought to be more familiar with Indian philosophy and Indian modes of thinking."
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> Mr. Johnson says: "Western philosophy has leaned for support against some other teaching or science and study drawing its colour therefrom. This is even so of Plato * * for Plato's

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[1] *Vedânta Bulletin,* Vol. 2, pp. 11-13.

[2] *Vedânta Bulletin,* May 1906, Vol. 2, p. 31.

[3] *Vedânta Bulletin,* May 1906, Voy. 2, pp. 32-33.

philosophy is entangled in dialectics and rests thereon. * * In the early Church, and on through the middle ages philosophy leaned upon theology * * etc.

"In India it is, and in the Golden Age it was, strikingly otherwise. There philosophy, *Vidyâ*, wisdom, stood boldly on its own feet, and begged support and countenance from no * * science or belief * * it was the supreme end of life.

"The other difference between Western and Eastern philosophy is even more fundamental. Western philosophy * * draws all * * its conclusions from our waking consciousness, and tears other modes of consciousness either as non-existent or as mere vagaries and reflections almost as morbid conditions of bodily life * *.

"Waking consciousness, so far from being the whole matter with the sages of India, is held to be merely the region outside the threshold. The sun is for them a good symbol of the spirit; the moon is a handy image for the changing mind; the atmosphere, with its storm and lightnings, does well to represent the emotional realm; fire typifies vitality, the rivers and seas are the tides of life. But the real world lies beyond (within) and must be sought with other eyes".[1]

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[1] *Vedânta Bulletin*, May 1906, p. 35.

CHAPTER TEN

The Swâmi left for India. He sailed May 16, 1906, after nine years in America. Swâmi Bodhânanda left Bombay for America April 15 to assume charge of the work after June first.

At the farewell reception tendered to the Swâmi were present the Mahârâjâ (Sayajee Râo Gaekwad) and the Mahârânee of Barodâ, "one of India's most powerful, enlightened and progressive monarchs", thus the Vice-president, Mr. Crossman, introduced their Majesties.

Swâmi Abhedânanda spoke at some length * * of the serious educational problem which confronted India, and of the important part the United States might play in helping her solve it. He also said: "When I was wandering as a *Sannyâsin* over India, I was entertained in the palace of His Highness, the Mahârâjâ and since that time I had always harboured the desire to be able to return in some way the kindness and courteous attention then shown me; but I did not dream that after fourteen long years I should be able to fulfil my wish by receiving His Highness in the home of the Vedânta Society in New York."

Dr. Girdner speaking impromptu said he would like to meet a few more heathen from India like Swâmi Abhedânanda and that the pennies as a child extracted from him by the missionary movement in America for India's conversion were gotten under false pretences.

The Mahârâjâ, a master of English and the art of speaking made two addresses, "declared his purpose in coming to America was to study our * * industrial methods that he might thereby help his own people on his return to Barodâ. Said he believed America was on the eve of a great spiritual renascence. Spoke in high terms of praise of the work of Swâmi Abhedânanda both in awakening a true sympathy and love for India and of the spread of the teachings of Vedânta. And he pointed out that his noble achievements had but exemplified the meaning of his name Abhedânanda, which signifies, in Sanskrit, "bliss through non-division or unity".

The farewell address to the Swâmi was read by the Secretary, Mrs. Cape. "For nine years", it ran in part, "you have laboured tirelessly among us, enduring hardship, opposition, even enmity, yet pushing on your course undaunted and unchecked. * * You have been to us an ever-wise and ever-loving Master and Teacher. Many of us who came to you ill in body and mind, are today strong in limb and full of new life. Everywhere you have brought hope, gladness, strength and spiritual light. Never can we pay the mighty debt we owe to you, except in striving day by day to embody in our lives the lofty truths you have taught us, and to remain staunch and loyal to the work to which you have devoted your life."

The *Indian Review* of March 3, 1906, a progressive periodical published at Madras has an article by M. Venkatarangam, B.A., on *Shelley and Vedânta*. The writer says:

> "Very often while reading the poetry of Shelley I have been impressed with the truth of the remarks, that the human mind takes no account of Geography, language or legends. * * Shelley gives expression to thoughts which resemble those of the Vedic *Upanishads*. * * The faculty of looking beyond the phenomenal to the noumenal was a special gift of Shelley."

A cable message from Colombo announces that Swâmi Abhedânanda arrived there safely on June 17th after a pleasant voyage. Letters received earlier from England and Marseilles stated that he was * * rested and ready for the work that lay before him in India.

A review of *India and Her People* by the editor of the *Bulletin* together with comment by the Director of the Institute of Arts and Sciences follows:

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1. *Vedânta Bulletin*, July 1906, Vol. 2, p. 71.

"*India and Her People* by Swâmi Abhedânanda has come from the press. It consists of a series of lectures delivered before the Institute during the winter of 1905-1906, and as the Director, Dr. Hooper, declares in an introductory note it 'contains precisely what the American wants to know about India'."

The Editor of the *Bulletin* goes on to say:

"The Swâmi was a deep student of Western science and philosophy before he came to us; the one year in England followed by nine years of active work in the United States has given him an unusual understanding of our civilization. He possesses, therefore the exceptional advantage of being able to look upon his own country almost from the standpoint of an outsider, and to handle his subject free from both foreign and native prejudice. It is evident that his heart is with India, but he does not allow his individual feelings in any way to blind his fair judgement; and every statement he makes is supported by quotations from recognized European, American, and especially English authorities.

"The first lecture is devoted to a clear and succinct account of the *leading schools of Indian philosophy*; while the second describes the *numerous religious sects* included in the *Sanâtana Dharma* or Eternal Religion of the Hindus. In the *Social Status of the Indian People*, the Swâmi points out among other things that the institution known to us as 'Caste' was in reality the outcome of an effort to establish a 'complete system of division of labour'. He also shows that the fundamental idea behind the community form of government, which has for centuries withstood the onslaught of invading nations, is that of complete self-sacrifice. 'The individual sacrifices his freedom for the sake of the family, the interest of the family is merged in that of the clan, and the clan sacrifices its interest for the community'. The two following lectures on the *Political Institutions and Education In India* are a strong arraignment of English rule in India; although the Swâmi evinces a sincere desire to give the British Government full credit for whatever of good it has brought to India. The closing lecture considers *The Influence of India on Western Civilization and the Influence of Western Civilization on India*, and the majority of readers will be surprised to learn from it how much of our language, religion and learning are directly traceable to Hindu sources.

"In treating each branch of his subject, the Swâmi draws a clear picture of the conditions prevailing in ancient India, of

> the effect of each successive invasion, and of the present state of the country. He also gives a large number of statistics, which makes the book of value for general reference as well as for its interesting reading and impressive style".[1]

The Society was happy to learn that Swâmi Abhedânanda arrived safely in Colombo, June 17th and was received with joy and welcome by the Hindu Community of Ceylon. In response to the address of welcome by the Reception Committee the Swâmi "gave a splendid reply, worthy of the occasion, with his characteristic fluency and force, mentioning briefly his experiences in the Western lands for the last ten years and the progress that the Religion of the Vedas has made since its introduction there by the great Swâmi Vivekânanda. * * He left Colombo on the 21st of June for Kandy, whence he went to Jaffna. * * From Jaffna on to India."

Swâmi Abhedânanda arrived at Madras July 15, 1906. From Colombo all along the route, the reports state, he was received in every town with ovations. At Madras the chairman introduced the Swâmi as the embodiment of the Spirit of Swâmi Vivekânanda. The Swâmi spoke at Mysore. He reviewed briefly the history of the inception and growth of the Vedânta work in the West and spoke in high terms of praise of the American people". He said: " * * that Western nations had yet to learn from the Hindus the great lesson that their true nature was not born in sin and iniquity as Christians taught but that they were children of Immortal Bliss and that it was Swâmi Vivekânanda who first held this ideal before the people of the West."

> "Professor Hiram Corson of Cornell University delivered a lecture before the members of the Vedânta Society on Monday evening, October 15, 1906. Subject of his lecture was the *Spiritual Meaning of Life as seen in Four Poems,* Robert Browning's *Popularity;* Mrs. Browning's *A Musical Instrument;* Walt Whitman's *Song of the Open Road;* and Tennyson's *The Gleam.*

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[1] *Vedânta Bulletin,* Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 75-76.

> * * 'The Lecturer expressed his disapproval of the too prevalent method in modern education of instilling facts instead of waking up the buried self.' The Vedânta idea that the flesh bars in the spirit and prevents its completest manifestations was seen to be a cardinal principle of Browning's and again like Vedânta. Browning and Whitman both taught that man must not rest in things finite but ever reach onward to things infinite".[1]

The rising tempo in the reports from India indicates joy and eagerness in the little circle, and the realization of unity registers through the passing weeks. We note hints of the Apostle's expected return. Dates of departure and dates of arrival are mentioned. The students reflect a warm optimism over every triumphal reception Mother India accords the return of this beloved son. He has done well, accomplished great things, the excerpts, the letters, and the speeches echo the welcome and the honours bestowed. In one instance the Apostle is called the "Embodiment of the Great Vivekânanda". The pages of the little *Bulletin* are fairly bursting with pride and content as the devoted students watch from afar the hour for his arrival. Each item that has any bearing upon the work or that in any way touches upon the fortunes of this Spiritual Family of their blessed teacher is remarkable. Witness the notice of a disciple "now in Belur Math", studying for orders. It is all loyal, happy and united rejoicing in and with each other. An interlude in the overall mission, that was slowly to bring to an end the Golden Age of the Society. All high crescendo is prophecy to an era closing. The years that followed were necessarily to be hard and difficult. Adjustments that tested men and character were in the making. Time was passing. Foundations had been laid—premise irrevocably established. Could even the most devoted among ye measure to the stature of those commitments? Is this substantial unity that Monism? Could even the initiates find their *Karma*—their Râja, their *Bhakti* in reason? Could the grand wise *Jñânins* find their Monism in worship,

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1. *Vedânta Bulletin,* Nov. 1906, p. 155.

work and experience? For this great Master, this Apostle who was "the last of the Great Ones" gave no quarter—in the synthesis that is Vedânta. He took stern measures, and wise father of his little flock, he never compromised an issue. No shadow fell athwart the grandeur of the Mission. He returned to us strong—determined—none yet recognized the new directional.

Let us record a few more of these items and then to the battlefield of Kurukshetra where the training was to become individual and intensive, a preparation for far horizons. The induction of philosophy, theory and premise and principle into 'applied psychology.' The students were to learn the Law, test the years of their earnest, incorporate their commitments, re-enact the drama of the *Gitâ*. The days of the trail blazing are over.

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Mr. Heyblom, (Swâmi Atulânanda), disciple of Swâmi Abhedânanda, who had charge of the California Shânti Ashram for four years, is living as *Sannyâsin* at the Belur Monastery near Calcutta.

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The Swâmi reached Calcutta September ninth. From here to Belur Monastery for rest then on to Benares and other places in the North-West among them the Ashram of the order at Mâyâvati in the Himâlayas.

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At one of the meetings a Chairman, Mr. Hagar, was appointed and a Committee formed to make efforts to establish a permanent Home for the Society, and a Mr. Jerrold was made chairman of a Committee to look for an Ashram site.

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The Swâmi is expected about Christmas. His first lecture *The Great Religious Teachers of the World* opens a new series scheduled to be delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences on January 8, 1907.

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Swâmi Abhedânanda left Calcutta on the 5th of October for the North, passed through Bânkipur, Benares, Allahabad and Agra.

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Swâmi Abhedânanda returned to New York on December 22, 1906, bringing with him the young Swâmi Paramânanda who had met Swâmi Abhedânanda at Colombo and travelled with him continuously from there throughout his entire pilgrimage.

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From Lead, South Dakota a group of miners, an independent centre of Vedânta, while without a Swâmi have been so fervent that the clergy were growing uneasy and began to take the matter up and deal with it from the pulpits.—*Vedânta Bulletin,* January 1907.

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"The flow and language of the lectures were so simple and attractive that even a boy of the 4th Standard could understand it very easily."—Report on Swâmi Abhedânanda from Alwâr by a student there.—*Vedânta Bulletin,* January 1907.

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A gentleman, professor in Elphinstone College says: "Let me come to the narration about the Swâmi and his lectures. * * I do not presume to describe what I or the people felt about the Swâmi. There is a maxim in our language according to which 'the sun cannot be pointed out by the torch's light'. * * He exhorted us to be national in sentiments and generous in conduct. I confess that he is one of the three or four men who have really impressed me, nay, inspired me with awe. He commanded my submission to his teaching; and although he is gone away, my heart acknowledges the boundless sway his presence exercised over it during the interview and after it."—*Vedânta Bulletin,* January 1907, pp. 19-20.

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Lafcadio Hearn: "Precisely in that period of our intellectual evolution when the most religious minds shrink from everything that we have been calling religion, when the universal doubt is an ever-growing weight upon ethical aspiration, light is offered from the East. There we find ourselves in the presence of an older and vaster faith, holding no gross anthropomorphic conception of the immeasurable Reality, but nevertheless inculcating a system of morals superior to any other, and maintaining a hope which no possible future form of positive knowledge can destroy. Reinforced by the teaching of science, the teaching of this more ancient faith is that for thousands of years we have been thinking inside-out and up-side-down. The reality is one;—all that we have taken for Substance is only shadow; the physical is the unreal, and the outer man is the ghost."—Lafcadio Hearn; *Vedânta Bulletin,* February 1907, p. 217.

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Extract from report of Vedânta Publication Committee to yearly meeting held at 62 West 71st Street, New York City January 10, 1907, President Parker presiding:

"In summing up the year's record of work, * * too much must not be expected, for the foothold which Vedânta has gained in this country is shown less by the number of its direct followers, or the extent of its book sales, *than by the way it has everywhere* modified and transformed existing

modes of thought; and this can never be set down in figures."
—Nablo.

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"Our most important achievement during the year was the publishing of Swâmi Abhedânanda's lectures before the Brooklyn Institute under the title *India and Her People*. This was favourably reviewed by a large number of the leading papers of this country and was so enthusiastically received in India that a second and cheaper edition in paper was issued for circulation there."

* * * * *

Swâmi Abhedânanda on January 13 delivered his first Sunday lecture since his return to America, the subject being *Vedânta as a Religion*. He quoted Max Müller's definition of religion: "That perception of the Infinite as embodied in finite objects which influences moral character." The Swâmi pointed out that such a perception of the Infinite was the fundamental aim in all true religion, and that it was because of departure from this broad principle that the dissensions and persecutions of religious history had arisen."

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The thirteenth anniversary of the Vedânta Society and celebration of the birthday of Swâmi Vivekânanda was held at the Society House on January fourteenth. Swâmi Abhedânanda conducted the meditation. Swâmi Paramânanda told incidents of Vivekânanda's life and character. Swâmi Bodhânanda in the afternoon read and expounded passages from *Upanishads* of which Swâmi Vivekânanda was especially fond. In the evening Swâmi Abhedânanda made an address reviewing the work, and showing how Vivekânanda, by organizing the Mission of Râmakrishna, had made a link between East and West.

Mrs. Cape, Mr. Stansbury Hagar (Vice-president of the Society), Mr. Nelson Smith, Miss Glenn, then Swâmi

Bodhânanda, all spoke a few words on Vivekânanda's life, work and influence."

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Swâmi Abhedananda accompanied Swâmi Bodhânanda to Pittsburgh and introduced him to the centre there where he took up the work as the Swâmi in charge for many years.

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Professor William James made mention of Hatha Yoga in a lecture entitled *Stores of Surplus Energy* delivered before a joint meeting of the American Philosophical Association.

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Swâmi Abhedânanda said at the celebration of Srî Râmakrishna's birth:

"The Keynote of the life teachings of Buddha was active self-sacrifice, while the mission of Krishna to the world was to teach divine love. The great work of Râmakrishna was to bring the message of harmony. He came not to reform but to unite. He pointed out the wondrous fact that the religions of the world are not antagonistic in themselves, but that they are essentially one. Behind all religious doctrines and dogmas there is one grand eternal Truth."—*Vedânta Bulletin*, March 1907.

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Of the New Theology promulgated by Rev. R. J. Campbell and his doctrine of At-one-ment stemming from London the *Vedânta Bulletin* says: "The thought waves from India are lapping on the shores of Western Civilization."

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Henry Thoreau says: "The reader is nowhere raised into and sustained in a higher or purer or rarer region of thought than in the *Bhagavad Gitâ.* Warren Hastings declares the original to be 'of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled', and that the writings of the Indian philosophers 'will long survive when the British dominion in India shall have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance."—*Vedânta Bulletin,* March 1907.

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Lâmâism in Tibet the last of the *Great Religious Teachers of the East* series was especially well received by the Institute audience. Meanwhile the Swâmi had been delivering a course of Sunday afternoon lectures at Carnegie Lyceum.

APHORISMS—EPIGRAMS

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

"When *Brahman* is qualified with limited self-consciousness and partial knowledge, it becomes the Soul, or appears as the individual soul of man. And when the same *Brahman* is qualified by the absence of self-consciousness it appears as Matter."—*The Pacific Vedântist,* January 1902.

"Theory is Philosophy: Practice is Religion."—Swâmi Abhedânanda.

THEORY AND PRACTICE:

"* * We must know the truth that each individual soul, that each individual knower, is the child of eternal Being, beginningless and endless. It is a part of that eternal substance which forms the background of the panorama of the phenomenal world; and yet it is the knower of energy, the knower of matter, and that knower dwells in our body. We are no longer in search after Truth which is far away from us; but when we have realized the truth within us, then we find that that eternal truth is the Soul of our souls, is the Life of our life, is the foundation of our existence, is the source of our consciousness and intelligence. It dwells everywhere."—SEARCH AFTER TRUTH —*Vedânta Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 53.

"When the Divinity incarnates himself in a human form, a tremendous flood of spirituality inundates the world, carrying the seed of saintliness everywhere, and all souls which come in touch with that flood will receive certain blessings, certain powers."—SELF-MASTERY OF A SAINT—*Vedânta Bulletin*, April 1906, p. 6, Vol. 2.

"The knowledge of truth brings freedom to the soul."—SEARCH AFTER TRUTH—*Vedânta Bulletin*, June 1906, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 39.

"Right reasoning * * enlightens the path that leads to truth." —SEARCH AFTER TRUTH—*Vedânta Bulletin*, June 1906, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 42.

"That which is eternal, beginningless and endless, is the eternal Truth."—SEARCH AFTER TRUTH—*Vedânta Bulletin*, June 1906, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 46.

"The objective world forms only one half of the universe, while the other half is the subjective world."—SEARCH AFTER TRUTH—*Vedânta Bulletin*, June 1906, Vol. 2, Vol. 3, p. 48.

"In order to perceive sensation our mind must be there."—SEARCH AFTER TRUTH—*Vedânta Bulletin*, June 1906, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 49.

"* * The state of perfection is one. It cannot be many."—WHAT IS PERFECTION—*Vedânta Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 103.

"* * The standard of perfection is universal. Every one will sooner or later reach that perfection. It is held to be the ideal of all nations."—WHAT IS PERFECTION—*Vedânta Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 103.

"The laws of nature are always perfect."—*Ibid.*

"Moral perfection comes when a man is absolutely free from self-consciousness."—*Ibid.*

"Spiritual perfection comes when one attains to the realization of the Supreme Spirit, *Which* is eternal."—*Ibid.*

"So long as we have the consciousness that we are individual units, separate from the Infinite Being, separate from God we are imperfect; but when that consciousness is removed and when Godconsciousness takes its place, then we are conscious of our nature as one with the Infinite Being."—*Ibid.*

"* * Our consciousness of the part is overpowered by the consciousness of the whole."—*Ibid.*

"The Divine Ideal is free from all limitations."—STEPS TOWARD REALIZATION—*Vedânta Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 8, p. 139.

"* * the Absolute spirit, the Infinite Being * * is called by various names. In Vedânta it is called *Brahman*, *Paramâtman* or *Over-Soul*; but it is the same as the *Good* of Plato, the *Substantia* of Spinoza, the transcendental *thing-in-itself* (*Ding an Sich*) of Kant, the *Will* of Schopenhauer, the *Unknown and Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer, the *Substance* of Ernst Haeckel, the *Science of Matter* of the Materialist, the *Real Entity* or *Spirit* of the Spiritualists. It is also the same as Christ. Christ is this Being, this Universal Spirit who is called by other names, and He is also Buddha. Buddha means that Eternal Wisdom, that Eternal Truth."—Swâmi Abhedânanda: ATTITUDE OF VEDANTA TOWARD ALL RELIGIONS—*Vedânta Bulletin*, December 1906, p. 164, Vol. 2, No. 9.

"The religion of Vedânta is inseparable from true science and from true philosophy."—*Ibid.*

"* * all sciences and all philosophies are nothing but so many attempts of human minds to grasp some particular phase of the Eternal Truth, the Infinite Reality."—*Ibid.*

ON IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL:

"Christianity, believing in the theory of special creation of the individual soul at the time of birth, denies the pre-existence of the human soul previous to the birth of the body; yet it admits the continuity of the soul after death in an eternal future. This doctrine again is not based upon a rational foundation, nor is it supported by any fact of nature, because it is impossible for a thing which has a beginning in time to last for ever."—Swâmi Abhedânanda: PRE-EXISTENCE AND IMMORTALITY—*Vedânta Bulletin*, October 1905, Vol. 1, No. 7.

"* * No theory of immortality can be perfect or complete without admitting the pre-existence of the soul. No theory has successfully proved the necessity of an eternal future life in the case of one whose existence in the past has proved to be unnecessary" * * etc.—*Ibid.*

"Modern spiritualism has thrown a little light upon the future that even the departed spirits do remember their past relations. This shows that memory does not depend entirely upon the physical organism, but memory goes with the soul wherever the soul goes. That is the real memory. The physical organism may be destroyed; it is only the machine through which that subliminal self is reproducing the powers which are latent in it."—*Ibid.*

" * * We must remember that immortality does not necessarily imply that we should go to heaven to eternally enjoy the celestial pleasures, or to go to an eternal perdition in order to suffer punishments on account of our evil deeds. These ideas are not necessarily included in the meaning of immortality. According to Vedânta, immortality includes the meaning of progress, growth and evolution of the soul from lower to higher stages of development; it also includes the idea that each individual soul will manifest the powers which are already latent in the soul by going through different states of growth and development until perfection and omniscience and omnipresence are acquired."—*Ibid.*

VEDANTA BOTH A PHILOSOPHY AND A RELIGION:

"Some people have an idea that, being a philosophy, Vedânta must be speculative, like any other philosophy of Europe and America, that it gives a few grand theories which can never be carried into practice. Such statements would be true if Vedânta were simply a philosophy and not a religion.

"In order to become a religion, the teachings of Vedânta must be intensely practical, because where theory ends there is the beginning of true religion. Vedânta gives not only the principles of the highest philosophy, but it also teaches the practical methods which are necessary to make it a religion. If the ideals of Vedânta do not cover the whole field of life, if they do not enter into every plane of our thoughts, nay of our very existence in home life, in social and business life, in moral and spiritual life, then we must reject them as mere theories of a speculative philosophy and must not call Vedânta a religion."

The Swâmi goes on to tell of how the ancient kings and great ones of Indian history both studied Vedânta as a grand philosophy and put it into practical application in their administrations of State and people. Tells of how Lord Krishna gave spiritual instruction to Arjuna upon the battlefield at Kurukshetra. Of the kings of the *Râmâyana* and *Mahâbhârata* periods when many ancient Hindu monarchs applied the teachings and the technics in their daily lives and statesmanship. This is the applied psychology which Vedânta teaches and which the Great Ones urged the West to emulate and to endorse in their busy lives whether as business men or in affairs of State—law, and the professions, and which Swâmi Abhedânanda never ceased to encourage in the humbler ranks of the clerks, the labourers or the householders. This was the secret of the phenomenal growth of Vedânta in those years of its inception. It was practical and no instance was too trivial, no opening to be overlooked. The Swâmi gave of his personal supervision, his perspective and his dynamic faith in the ever-present coincidence of thought and action. The mind did not exist that could refuse capitulation to the eternal values—he for ever re-enacted before our astonished Self. In the small incidence our awakening minds became energized to new statures. We found St. Paul upon the road to Damascus, and our daily bread was of Immanence. "Whosoever," he taught, "holds the highest ideal and walks in the path of unselfishness is virtuous, is unselfish, is righteous and is spiritual."

Extract from the lecture: *The Great Saviours of the World* by Swâmi Abhedânanda:

> "If we cannot recognize the Divinity in the prophets of other nations, in the saviours of other people, then we have not realized the Divinity of our own prophet and have not understood the eternal Truth of the unity of Divine being under the variety of names and forms. If a mother cannot recognize her son when he changes the colour of his garment or puts on the dress of a foreigner, I am sure that she is not a

true mother. Similarly, I am sure that the Christian who sees Divinity in Christ alone and does not recognize his own Master when he comes in the form of Buddha or Krishna, has not realized the Divinity of Jesus the Christ.

"* * All these prophets, these messengers of God, are great. Each one was commissioned by the Almighty to deliver His message. Each one of them was a glorious Son of God, a perfected soul, manifested for the good of humanity to establish righteousness and to destroy evil."—*Monthly Bulletin*, Dec. 1905, p. 139.

The basic tenet of Vedânta is Unity.

PART THREE

ASHRAM THRESHOLDS

ASHRAM THRESHOLDS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

During the year from November 1906—1907 I was working on the *Rochester Evening Post Express* having taken a position on the paper as linotype operator. This paper was founded in the City of Rochester during the Civil War period by my grandfather, Charles W. Hebard. We left Rochester, my birthplace, when my father moved the family to New York City in 1895. After an absence of eleven years I found upon my return to Rochester much difficulty in readjusting to the provincial thinking of the family clans. To whatever ideology I turned there was friction and opposition. I had read a great deal of Emerson and Thomas Paine, Walt Whitman and some of the Greek philosophers; and following in the footsteps of my father who was known in Rochester as a rebel and inconoclast I found myself a ship without a sail, alone in one of the most outstanding centres of conservative education and culture. I turned to Theosophy as much to defy the relatives as to find some anchorage and tenets that would give me a contactual and working thesis. I soon found the teachings held nothing for me and the Unitarian Society with which I had been more or less for years affiliated while offering a grand ethic and comparative historical study of religion could at this period of my life give nothing. It was a dark unhappy year within my forming mind. I knew not what I wanted nor how to seek it. I experimented with Spiritualism, threw over Theosophy and then in despair gave up my position and returned to New York City, drawn by what force I knew not. A few weeks before I left Rochester an English gentleman visited the Lodge meeting and he was kind enough to realize my mind was in a dangerous tangle going in circles and getting nowhere; everything given was but words,—words for, and words against, without tenet or tenure that touched neither reason nor the heart. "I know what you need, and where you can find it", he said to me, one evening. "The Swâmis have it". "And who are the Swâmis?" I asked, "and what have they?" "Something I have not but that you will find there. I have visited their home with my daughter and you will visit it too. Something is there and I truly know you will find yourself". He gave me the address of this daughter, Anita Trueman; in fact wrote her of my coming and she met me at the train. We laid our plans and next day I made my first visit to the Vedânta House. The Swâmi was in India. The Secretary, Mrs. Cape, into whose hands Miss Trueman would have placed me was out of town. Meanwhile, my friend was very kind. Her patience with a stubborn and rebellious and too ghastly sincere a nature she struggled on and off all winter. Why we did not go again to the Society House that winter and spring I do not now recall. She was a public speaker and an earnest follower of the Swâmi's teaching but refused to affilliate herself with the Society. She constantly admonished me again and again not to be a "joiner". Universals should teach outside of any organization. She was a strong soul. It was at the Green Acre Conferences that she met the Swâmi, and became his "spiritual child". Her work called her on tour a great deal. We made our home together but our work was clearly defined in almost alien fields. Her clientele was among a social set that to me were sophisticate and superficial. I avoided every contact with them. I was the realist or nothing. In March 1907 a woman wrote asking to visit Miss Trueman. She was a Miss Elizabeth Ann Mayson coming from Washington, D.C., for an appointment with Swâmi Abhedânanda. I was alone the Sunday she arrived. She explained many things to me. Years later when I learned to know her well she told me that that day for five solid hours I posed questions that so confounded her she was both anxious and determined to direct me somehow to the Swâmi. I did not see her again alone before she left. Strange how close and yet how far. One Sunday in April a young friend and I attended the morning lecture at the Vedânta House. We did not meet the Swâmi. From where we sat in the overcrowded rooms, I could now and then see the reflection of his face in the mirror, but in the press of people about him I lost my courage and we slipped out without meeting him or making enquiries. That fall, I received a card from Miss Mayson who had moved to New York to study under the Swâmi and was living in a rooming house some thirty or forty blocks from me. She addressed it to Miss Anita Trueman and underneeth, or Miss Mary Hebard. Strange the workings of the mind! I did not observe my name at all, when I brought in the mail and laid it on my desk awaiting Anita's forwarding address. It lay there some two to three weeks, when one day I picked it up, thinking, "this is in my way". Then I saw my name beneath. I sat down and wrote to Miss Mayson at once, asking her to call at my apartment. We were soon fast friends and I invited her to take up housekeeping with me as Anita was permanently on tour. Miss Mayson soon had me enrolled in the Society, and attending classes and lectures. For some weeks and months it was Swâmi Paramânanda's classes and lectures I attended for this season Swâmi Abhedânanda was lecturing at large. About this time the *Gospel of Srî Râmakrishna* appeared on the sales table. It was on Monday, October 7, 1907, that "I went to the Printers and gave the *Gospel* for print," the Swâmi writes in *Leaves from My Diary*. This was the first time these recordings (*Gospel*) made by "M" [1] during the lifetime of Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna were published. They are unique in that the sayings and daily teachings of the Master were recorded day by day and transcribed during the lifetime of the Prophet, later to become a part of not only Indian but of the world's Scriptures.

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[1] "M"—Master Mohâshaya or Sj. Mahendra Nâth Gupta who compiled the *Kathâmrita* or *The Gospel of Râmakrishna.*

The work appeared in pocket format on Bible paper in two bindings,—leather and a flexible silk cloth—in choice of two colours, lavender, and yellow of the Indian Robe. Swâmi Abhedânanda edited and prepared the copy from the originals into chapters adding small marginal headings in blackface type. There was a fine index. The Introduction he wrote is one of the finest pieces of literature from any Indian pen.

I attended both Tuesday and Thursday evening classes and his Sunday morning lectures. Still I was restless, miserable and unsatisfied. When the meeting was thrown open to questions, I would pose my list so carefully prepared all week. The young teacher was patient and did all he could but nothing touched my soul. Finally, he tried dictation and then exercised certain psychic forces thinking I suppose to quieten or quicken my understanding. Nothing touched my sad and hardened mind. I had asked him for the breathing exercises for weeks and he continuously put me off. Finally, one Sunday after lecture he said: "The other Swâmi gives those. You will have to go to him." That was my springboard. I flew to Miss Mayson and she at once went to Swâmi's study and asked for an appointment for me. He gave it at once and when I sat at last in his presence all I seemed to sense was "why did you wait so long?" He was most gracious, most kind. I told him how this one and that one kept me away. "They do not understand you"—and from then on my crazy mind was in good hands. Slowly and surely he directed me to causes, helped me to meanings behind the babble of words, reoriented me from all the follies of psychism and powers to which I was so sensitized, turned me to the intuitive reasoning, taught me to think through from cause to effect, taught me through revelation and unity—the grand mystery of simplicity, taught me fearlessness in lesson after lesson—I who had thought I had no fear and had antagonized every one with my positiveness and aggression. Even going so far as to himself assume a ferocity and sternness that dared me on to challenge and to face my stormy self. The grandeur of his patience, the glory of his selflessness and love for all mankind that took unending pains to guide us all. I and all of us revered him and yet how I dared challenge his every instruction, watched lest he think I accepted without testing when it came to anything affecting my personal conduct, and this, all this after he made me his disciple. What a constant problem his children were. There were others too who defied his commands, but not so persistently.

I hope with the vicissitude of years we have learned to heed wisdom, or rather to know wisdom when we meet it, and question not. One thing at this time I wish to make very clear. During the weeks of tutelage under Swâmi Paramânanda he taught much that was good, but he was not at any time my Teacher, save as one learns from every contact and situation in life. He could not touch the quick whereof is the beginning of learning, at least for me. The little Swâmi was very young. He did not understand the West and he needed intellectual discipline and orientation to a new socialization and different people if he was to go far. While the Swâmi was in London, Swâmi Paramânanda was insisting himself into too difficult and large a problem—there was much unrest in the Society over the powers he assumed. The Swâmi had arranged for him a definite and advanced education at Columbia University but the young lad—he was only 21—when he came to the West—was both vain and arrogant and felt he could carry on on his own and displace the older Swâmi. How he could ever reason that the solid students would sanction this is proof of his small understanding of the Western temper and mind. Swâmi Abhedânanda offered to resign and give everything into Paramânanda's keeping at the General Meeting in January 1908 at which I was present. A few voted for Swâmi Paramânanda, some six or seven—older students too, they were, who resented the harder disciplines of the deeper study the Swâmi was intensifying; mostly ladies who looked upon the young Swâmi as a prophet out of India and who had appealed to his youthful vanity with this opportunity to exercise their mother complex. So it seemed to us who organized the return of Swâmi Abhedananda from London where he had gone in answer to the urgent call that he organized the work in England; also in France where the people were calling him. He left us on January 29 and remained abroad until midsummer. When he returned he spent some months at the Ashrama recently opened in the Berkshire Hills. Established the Peace Retreat there with the students he had left in charge before opening the New York season that fall of 1908. Late that year after the close of the summer season he sent Miss Mayson to the Ashram to become a resident worker and to take up the intensive training for which she had so long prepared. There were too other permanent workers in residence there. A Mrs. Logan and a Mr. Le Page. Mr. Le Page had wintered it alone there the year before under considerable hardships. The place was needing workers, development and improvements which came slowly. The undertaking was a colossal one and the achievement of which was the Swâmi's dearest desire. He wished to give the benefit of the deeper teaching to America and leave another Twelve to carry the torch as his Master had done before him.

Another outstanding fact of this year and to me a most blessed and tender one. The Swâmi, on December 15, 1908, made me his disciple. To those perhaps who have never had this gracious gift bequeathed from the Great Ones, let me here say that initiation is a mystery and an experience. It is spiritual transfusion—as much a reality as is the gift of a blood donor to exhausted or expiring comrade in arms. One lives henceforth as an Ambassador of Truth as never before. One has been literally commandered into the Grand Hierarchy and henceforth his life is a Trusteeship. He can no longer, even though he would, strive selfish ends. He is the Impersonal and all laws, all forces conspire to change his body of relativity from personal ends to face at long last the grand eternities toward which the Soul has from everlasting conspired with life to help him attain. This is the meaning of the *Guru.* Man realizes his conscience, rather than obeys. He lives the law; he is the Law. He aches to universal ends, sorrows to all humanity. Suffers the majesty that his days may be directed onward and inward. This new radiance, this sublimity shining through the mundane and the ordinary so changes the outlook and the inlook of a disciple's living that suffering becomes a test to character, an opportunity to new placements in values, a worthy worthwhileness where all before had been without meaning.

The weekend over that Christmas holiday I was given permission to make my first visit to the Ashram of which I had heard so much and saw again my dear friend Miss Mayson. My reaction to that place was vital and enduring. It was as if one went into a world without objectivity. One became subjective, only the mind ruled. Habits, inhibitions seemed to fall away absorbed by the aliveness and the silence. A new and supercharged atmosphere swept away the mind's trappings. Stark and free motif and tensions lost their drives—only *the will-to-be* gathered the heart and the self to new spheres. One listened inside, becoming rest itself. For the first time in my 29 years I knew what it was to be clothed in an honesty so honest neither explanation nor analysis were needed to relate one's self to one's companions or to one's environment. In two short years that place had power and spirit as of some cosmic entity. Something immersed in universals. I will never forget the strange beauty of a grove of trees stricken by long past fires, standing stark and chaste against the winter sky. I gasped and caught my breath—so symbolic of the burned out glamours of living, naked before their maker in mute testimony to other-worldliness. Thirty-five years later I was to know in all its reality the terror and the joy of such complete renunciation.

It was a tremendous privilege to have been at this Ashram only once. What then of permanent residence within that spiritual cathedral close of nature, strengthened and sustained by an all unfolding unity, articulate and sensate!

. Here at the Ashram the Apostle could direct and control, here he could centre the spiritual energies, disseminate the living tenets of his Great Inheritance. The hills range with the vibrations of a released cosmos, sentient and articulate. Questions answered themselves unvoiced as the reverberations of some great bell returns the echo of its gong. Truth was self-revealing, swift and sure. Much of the beauty of those templed hills, pastures and woods was of course in their natural setting—rugged and untilled. An old Connecticut farm through which ran a clear brook, several springs, old barns and sheds and house needing renovation, all to be undertaken and restored during the years in prospect. This first visit I made to the place, the snow was deep and the white world like a sound-proof room into which all empty thoughts died aborning. The few students conversed in precepts and there prevailed a constant meditation of work or silence, an utter simplicity ruled and a new dignity as of the Self. The memory of that visit is like the chastity of God, the world stood still, nothing existed but a Presence that consumed one into some divine Grace. Years passed before I found again far out upon the Mohave Desert such a day of suspended thought and life and experienced again this overwhelming realization. Learned then that Ashrams are patterened after those pools of quiet stratosphere within the being, within the identifications where the spirit takes over and the heart reacts to eternal oneness alone. I am well in advance of my story.

A grand reception was planned and Swâmi Paramânanda and his chosen few were given god-speed in the work they had outlined for themselves. Their immediate destination was in New Jersey and in the parlours of some students there established the beginnings of their new Centre. From small beginnings they made a line of cleavage and built, I am told, from Boston to Los Angeles a group of Centres, which prospered for years along rather independent lines. In La Creascenta there carries on in his name to this day what is called the Ananda Ashram, founded by him. A beautiful place it is with its Temple and its cloisters and a band of workers devoted to the perpetuation of Swâmi Paramânanda's name.

In this year 1909 began my own association with a few of the activities in the Society. I visited the rooms on all holidays from office, and attended every lecture Sunday and week days. It was lonely at first. I missed Miss Mayson. Slowly I made my place and was assigned duties on the Vedânta magazine which took over the suspended publication of the *Bulletin*. It lasted one year, January 1909 to December 1909 ending with the Christmas edition. I well recall a few incidences that occurred that year and will relate them for their colour and their human interest giving touches of the manner in which the Apostle drove home his truths.

Early in February 1909 I made my own plans to take residence in the Ashram but the Swâmi learning of the attempt thwarted them and sent me back to my work and another year's probation. This was just before he sailed for London on Washington's birthday. A group of us went to the boat to bid him a second farewell. On this occasions he revealed a glimpse to me in the equations of values that stirred resonances long asleep, also his own gift of prescience. At the farewell reception tendered him at the Society House I was present, bringing with me as usual a host of young folk. The rooms were crowded and as we were leaving and I bade him good night and bon voyage, I was suddenly aware he was still holding my hand, while the growing line of guests behind me waited to make their adieus. At that instant he released me. As I left I felt the sense of events suspended. He did not expect me at the boat, but on some spur of the moment I asked leave at the office next day in time to join the few on deck and see again our Apostle before he sailed. He was surprised to see me and very perfunctory in these final moments. It troubled me!

On March 17th following I was taken to the hospital where for five weeks I lay with typhoid fever. Then I knew his prescience and his goodness had protected me, lifted me for those quiet seconds into Srî Râmakrishna's care where the Law prevails. When he learned of my illness he wrote bidding me thank Srî Râmakrishna for the *blessed* return to health. Note blessed—it was not return to health, it was to be a reconsecrated life. O most gracious and majestic teacher!

CHAPTER TWELVE

On my return to convalescence I spent a few months at my brother's insistence in his home in Pittsburgh, still carrying on my work by mail for the Vedânta magazine, of which I was now managing editor. I had some interesting tangles with the business manager, a very much older woman than myself and a senior student. The Swâmi placed us together in this work, two dominant characters and through the grace of our forensic battles I lost the last vestiges of my timidity in speaking my convictions. These the situations that always seemed to arrange themselves, incidence by incidence, yet as time passed I grew to see the staging and the character that emerged through his wise oversight and direction.

Upon Swâmi's return from England he gave me the first and only commendation I ever received from him in words. He wrote me of how "well pleased" he was with my work on the magazine. How I cherished those few words. I was one of those individuals to whom praise was springboard to finer and better effort. Yet it was never given me from the time I put my foot upon the Path. I was to learn down the years that I must so know the right from the wrong that conviction only was to be my mainspring of each and every effort,—so realize reality from the phenomenal that nothing could daunt, nothing could incite, but that edge where two planes meet. So early in my novitiate did the grand pattern of Swâmi's teaching come in flashes; so soon as he was aware of the discovery he would withdraw into further subtlety, further aloofness and the student found himself digging as never before to translate the meaning of words or action or those silences when he simply did not hear nor see nor answer.

Mrs. Cape one day gave a group of us younger students this counsel. "Never let the Swâmi put you off without an answer or an explanation when you are in doubt over even the simplest incident." Then she told us how early in her own studentship she had brought to the Râmakrishna Celebration a very beautiful selection of flowers, one over which she had spent much time to make especially fitting nor had she spared in price. "As I entered the chapel the Swâmi was standing near the altar and I rushed toward him in my happy enthusiasm and asked him if he did not like the flowers I was offering. I was stunned when he turned his back deliberately refusing to speak or acknowledge my sacrifice. It was not like the Swâmi. Above all he was always the gracious gentleman, and this was a thing no Western man less accomplished than the Swâmi would ever do. I was deeply hurt and also puzzled. I tried again to ask him what it all meant before I left the Society House that day but he evaded me and turned away. I am one of those who dig for causes until I find them, so a few days later when I was at the House I cornered the Swâmi and said I *would* know his intent and his lesson, that he must have a reason. Then he told me: 'Did you bring those flowers to me or to my Master?' and the light broke upon me. I never forgot this lesson coming indirectly as it did. Mrs. Cape was one of those grand *Jñânin* students who could share her experience wherever she felt there was need. To this day my own children in selecting a gift or offering or even a flower are very chary that they do not rob it of the pre-giving élan. On this point one recalls the spirit of the *Gitâ* aphorisms. He who smells and smells not, tastes and tastes not, sees and sees not, hears yet hears not, feels yet touches not, alone makes pure sacrifice. Thus we learned to walk softly, deal kindly and truly, gradually learning to live from precept and not from sentiment.

Another incident which was told to me. I was not present. The Secretary, a very gracious and beautiful woman and another student were in the library working at their desks when a stranger was ushered in by the housekeeper. After making certain general enquiries he became personal and then offensive in his remarks regarding the Swâmi, raising his voice and demanding to know why Western women could be found in any social circle with 'black' Hindus. The ladies were doing what they could in their indignant way to remonstrate and end this unpleasant contretemp. A step on the stair and before he knew what had happened this obnoxious stranger found himself measuring his distance down the front steps where he landed on the sidewalk in the street. The Swâmi could act when occasion demanded, as gallantly and as virtuously as the most able warrior, and none to question. As this news spread throughout the Society circles a certain quiet gladness and forthright understanding and respect gave the Swâmi new stature among us all. One began to know as never before that Master and man were one and peerless in any situation, contretemp or assignment.

Bits of high humour and play as well entered into the sobriety and dignity even of Yoga class instruction. A sister and a brother had come into the Society among other new and recent faces that season. They were so eager, so confident and enthused. After a few weeks their earnestness culminated into a half comic play of which they had no cognisance. The boy asked for a new breathing exercise, and then the sister asked for one, each falling over the other's request as though one would not be outstripped by the other. The Swâmi asked each the lesson which was being practised, the results obtained and were they sure the lesson had given them full benefits it held. "Oh, yes, Oh, yes"—the Swâmi smiled, then laughed good naturedly, "All right", he said to the girl, "you may have the next one also,—don't let him get ahead of you". The class enjoyed the humour. Soon these two came no more. They were skimmers, not curiosity driven so much as scatterbrains. I recalled then of reading that Swâmi Vivekânanda said: "I would shout these teachings from the housetops when people tell me that they are dangerous. Nothing but good can come from these truths." None can see, none can imbibe where the mind is not open, nor the self not ready for enlightenment. Only he attends the University who is desiring the education for which one must work. Edward Conklin in his *Heredity and Environment* said: "That that man is educated who has aroused the will to know." So with Vedânta, with both the philosophy and the Yogas and the religion. He alone retains, he alone acquires wisdom and realization whose mind is attuned to the need. There is an inner doctrine, a living reality within these Yogas, within the meditations and the breathing exercises as there is within the philosophy and the religion of Vedânta which reveals itself only as the candidate is able to expose his aptitudes to the spiritual law which abides within and inspires one's search. So students who found no food, had no deep and poignant need for the realization of truth, dropped themselves from the register heeding other marts and other scenes.

When the Swâmi was about to leave for London in February 1909 the late afternoon of the day before his sailing, there was delivered to the door a couple of the Swâmi's suits from the cleaners. Mrs. Kelly was chagrined when the Swâmi took them in. "But you needed new ones". "But see, where I could not mend, the tailor did". And he had attended to these tasks himself paying the bills from his small allowance of twenty dollars a month. I was given to understand that this shocking omission was attended to long ere his return from London, now too near sailing time even to buy new suits. So he left us, to go before the London circles, who were clamouring for him to take up residence among them, in worn and mended clothes. The Society was always struggling, always raising funds, earnest and sincere in all it could do. Yet sometimes those few in the upper bracket income group were sadly amiss in their oversight. So many looked upon it all as tithing, and the tenths were small and far between. The workers and small salaried students gave more generously and a few, a very few accepted hardship and severe deprivation in their earnestness to learn the Law, both in New York headquarters and at the Ashram. The Swâmi rewarded those devoted ones with every opportunity for a rich and abundant experience in spiritual returns. Many many fold the interest vested in his care. He harrowed and ploughed deep the soil of our every understanding, rewarded seventy times seven every effort, attention sacrifice and offering we made. Watching from long range, he waited our quickening, ever alert to the smallest need. Adjusted pressures and strains to some master strength through which ran the cognizant spirit and the reason. Returned us clear patterns to serve as rudder and translation to the imponderables.

One day I was alone in charge of the Library and Reception room. The Swâmi was at the Ashram. A lady called and when she found he was not there and none other to consult, she asked me about this aphorism of *ahimsâ*. She had a problem she knew not how to answer and she must do something at once. I told her I did not know, I would answer as best I could, she to determine her own commitments; that I spoke not for the Swâmi at all, only as I saw it for myself. It seems her husband was suffering from some incurable infection; the wound would not heal, and she could not keep the maggots from developing without taking life. It troubled her. Evidently this idea of complete and utter "harmlessness" to any living thing left out of the running the higher form of life, which was the husband, and the maggots, a vampire kingdom, feeding lawless on distress, so I told her. Then as she said she had so practiced non-killing that not even flies, she kept them out by screens, and simply did not kill. Then I got hard. "Well, do this then, (and what a perfect *Bhakti* she would make, I was thinking), kill the maggots but as you smother out their life, realize it is yourself and commmand them to go higher, to re-manifest in a form that does not live on distress of other life." See not death but transition. One can kill all vermin after that formula, so I was taught by a woman who had studied under the Swâmi but whether this was his teaching or not I did not know. It sufficed me as a *Bramachârin* householder. She seemed astounded at the simplicity of this solution and satisfied. I never saw her again, and in the press of more perplexing matters I failed to present this to the Swâmi. Later when I was for a short time resident at the Ashram, we had an influx of guests among whom was a Mrs. Thomas on her first visit there who put up a grand ado because "my room is full of wasps, Swâmi, great yellow wasps. I am frightened to death"! So said the Swâmi: "Miss Hebard, get the fly swatter and clear Mrs. Thomas' room of wasps, at once." Now I too was afraid of wasps, and I mean *afraid,* but under that challenge and with those dramatics to fortify me from the lady who was twice my size and bulk, I would not confess to fear. "Yes, Swâmi," and I put wings to his "at once". There were exactly five wasps in the room and they came quite willingly to the strokes of my swatter. I felt almost silly to kill them. Next morning the Swâmi said: "And Mrs. Thomas, the wasps? Did they trouble you?" "Oh, no, Swâmi! Miss Hebard killed them all. The room was quite all right." Underneath all this play I felt the moving of a larger drama, a coherence of forces forming to some other end. What a continuity extending every incidence and meaning interweaving through the threads of our spiritual living. There were repercussions, but I realized though perhaps the others didn't that the drive of my disgust at the lady's childish affectations killed the wasps. No bravery whatsoever on my part in meeting fears or foe.

The Swâmi told me how when he roomed in a boarding house where many of the clerks from Bloomingdale's store were tenants (that would be in the very early days when the Society's means were limited indeed, and their support of the Swâmi not yet in stride) that while he would write his lectures the waterbugs with which the East side of New York City was so infested would crawl upon his arms and hands and he would blow them off. Two ideas struck me as he told me this. First, what an environment in which to support the Swâmi, and second, 'why didn't you kill them off.' He looked at me a bit consciously as he told me this and I wondered did he read my thinking that he could have killed them, and then I remembered this *ahimsâ*—one must injure no helpless thing, and that may be a Great One to be great must maintain laws beyond our ken, even to save suffering vermin at large. It never deeply troubled me, this matter, certainly not sufficiently to make an issue with the Swâmi at this time. I have often wished I had analyzed it through with him since of late years so many have asked me what is permissible to right action. I have always kept house and I have always given human life and comfort the benefits of a perfect sanitation, but I am of the West. Another thing impresses me and that is of how little thought is given to the grass and flowers we walk on. The one instance of an almost holy horror possessing me when a lady brought to my home a gorgeous salad rich in colour by putting in violet and gay nasturtion blossoms *to be eaten!* I could eat meat, but not flowers—*that* was wanton. We strike down weeds, rank and foreign growth in our gardens, but vermin preying on higher forms of life such as domestic animals that do give some service to man in his upward climb I get ruthless and to such admonish the great Western slogan: "Use common sense, that's what it's for." Such foolishness!

There are other and wiser reasonings on these tenets as there are subjects of deeper import. Those great sages and *Rishis,* Yogis who have made attainment through this path of *ahimsâ,* extreme harmlessness, and have found single vision by injuring no living thing are not to be questioned. The *Gitâ* gives the sure guidance to those who must labour in the life of relativity and those who seek will find therein the answer. "If the Red slayer thinks he slays"—the interliving between and not of sense.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Many are the legends extant of the Swâmi's great Yogic powers. He conceded none, nor denied; but there were instances of his great mercy and his gift of healing that no admonishment nor instruction could keep students forever silent, and the legend grew.

The grandest miracle of all, it seems to me, was the restoration of a woman's sanity. This woman's sister, it seems, was a student. At least she frequented the Society House and was well acquainted with the Swâmi, I was told. When this woman became deranged and was confined to the violent ward of a sanitorium for the insane and pronounced a hopeless case, the sister came to the Swâmi in her despair. Declaring her utter faith in his power and goodness she made insistent plea that he try to heal her. To all his remonstrances that he had no power, he was no Yogî, or healer, she gave little heed. Finally when he could not longer dissuade her, he conceded this much: "Come back in three days. I will give you an answer then." She did so and he accompanied her to the institution. He sat quietly beside the woman, stroked and held her hand, at times talked very quietly and meditated. Nothing startling, no magic, only the quiet beauty and power of seeing the whole. He was with her thus a little time, I was told, and then left with the sister who had brought him. The sick woman in a short time was discharged and returned to her home and family, marvelously better and stronger than she had been before her breakdown. When the sister tried in some way to pay the Swâmi, offered jewels and money, sternly he said: "Truth is not bought or purchased. I have done nothing. Only the Master heals." He would take nothing. I personally knew during this year two young women, twin sisters, who had become victims of certain psychic practices peculiar to one of the leading cults of the day, and they did not know how to break those drives. One of these sisters was near to a nervous breakdown bordering on derangement, at the time when they came to the Swâmi. The girls themselves told me of how cruelly they had been victimized by such false teachings and possessed by delusions. Their gratitude to the Swâmi was beyond all bounds for their return to a normal and happy life. This was not legend. Their restoration was known to a number of us at the time.

The other instance was my own recovery from an incipient goitre that had troubled me for several years. This disappeared within a few weeks after attending the Swâmi's classes. I never spoke of it to him. Sitting in his quiet presence had accomplished this. After some number of classes and attending the lectures I found one day all symptoms had disappeared, all swelling gone. It never returned. There is such a thing, admitted by modern investigators into the *ESP* (Extra-sensory Perception) studies, as frequency[1] and that one can increase by certain attitudes one's own frequencies. This should be of interest to those who are grown to the study of finer recordings, and students of the occult and the Society of Psychical Research might find links between the phenomena and noumena not otherwise comprehended.

As to the Swâmi's prescience there was no question. His mastery in this field ammounted to a gift. He could foretell, since he could see through conditions and beyond; an instance in my own experience testifies to this. A lady relative of a close friend (this lady I did not know intimately) came to visit me for a week. She met with a grievous emotional shock during her luncheon hour at the office, and returned at once to my home. That afternoon before my own arrival at my apartment, she had attempted suicide and my house-keeper discovered and resuscitated her. We had some hectic hours. She asked later to go with me and my friend to hear the Swâmi of whom she had heard us talk so much. We took her and of all amazing things he interpolated an analysis of suicide into his lecture. What great dangers it led to in holding back spiritual progress, and gave comfort and instruction to all so tempted. After the lecture she insisted on my presenting her to the Swâmi. In thanking him for his lecture she revealed her trouble and her great gratitude for his help. Within three weeks of this strange happening she passed on naturally and in peace. How did the Swâmi know? *You* ask. His gift of prescience was marvellous. There were constantly occurring, these small miracles. Their frequency and their timing at length gave one a certain assurance. If you needed to see him, or he had a message or instruction for you, you would unexpectedly meet him on a street corner, or in some public place contrary to all seeming routines. If you wished to withhold something from him that he should know, that is the thing he would inadvertently come to know in the most surprising way, yet through seemingly ordinary channels. Sometimes I was so mystified I felt myself believing the Yogis *could* read your thoughts. Now it seems to me that his mind was aware on all planes, the conscious, the subconscious and the superconscious, and I verily believe that there were times when he functioned in all three planes instantaneously. He never taught powers, nor did he deny them. He advised against their economic loss, time spent apart from the study of God-consciousness was wasted effort and led to folly and delay in his eyes. Service, that selfless service to the Noumena and the subjective, search for meanings and the knowledge of spiritual values, meditation upon the *Atman*, was the work he urged upon us, as a constant and able livingness; "not this, not this" was the rigour and the Yoga by which the mind trained its perceptives and its reason to realize the sublime and the eternal. That gossamer thread of living light stronger than the mind itself, stronger than all the reliabilities known to man beyond all name and form, beyond shadow and substance, on to the immortality, that inness that is seed to the universals.

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[1] *Vide* Stewart Edward White: *Unobstructed Universe.*

In August of 1909 I returned from Pittsburgh to New York City, rented a room on the top floor of the Society House and settled down to work again at De Vinnes' printing plant in my former position as linotype operator from which I had been given indefinite leave at the time of my hospitalization the March before.. The Swâmi wanted me to take residence in the Vedânta House feeling the quiet would be better for me than to refurnish and being housekeeping in an apartment. He was about to go to the Ashram following a short lecturing engagement after his return from London. He asked me to undertake the editing and compiling of his *Indian Lectures and Travels* that he was wanting prepared for the press. I was overwhelmed at the trust imposed in me and accepted this charge with joy, thankful at last that I might be of some worthwhile service to one to whom I owed so much. The manuscript had made little progress with the lady to whom he had entrusted it, owing to her many duties both with the Society and her home, so it was with the resolve I would undertake the work and give it dispatch. Mrs. Cape kindly turned over to me her fine maps of India and hoped I would get the results she had not been able to accomplish.

A few weeks passed and I found myself at the Ashram in response to some force beyond my ability to resist. I did not question, I obeyed in opposition to all the Swâmi's written instructions that I was to come to the Retreat. This was the second time I had to summon all my courage to face the Swâmi after disobeying his declared edicts. None but he could have realized how deep rooted were my timidities. This time I had completely disposed of all my holdings, family claims and laid upon the faith within myself all the wrath to come for this second disobedience.

I arrived by train in West Cornwall about midday. There was no conveyance from the Ashram that day. I found a livery stable and for two dollars had myself and my trunks transported to the Ashram. This left me two dollars and thirty five cents in my purse. I had hoped there would be less. Was I testing also the Swâmi, perhaps, for I reasoned he could not allow me to walk ninety-nine miles to New York. He must give me residence at the Ashram. They were all—guests and workers—sitting on the front verandah when the equipage landed. One of the younger women ran to meet me, a Swedish girl who was vacationing there. She felt neither embarrassment nor surprise, gave me a lovely welcome and walked with me to where the Swâmi sat, very sober and seemed in what we term a brown study. He was quite formal in his greeting and said: "So, you have come for a few days' visit." "No, Swâmi, I have come to stay here, reside here, work here." "No, no, a visit. You return in three days." It seemed futile to argue. Presently I looked up. We were alone. "Have you lunched?" "No, Swâmi." "Then you may be my guest at luncheon as I have not lunched." We went in together. He told this one and that one: "Miss Hebard is to be with us, my guest, for three days." To all else he was adamant. Those three days I think every fibre of my soul was explored. The things I could not reconcile, that inner call against that outer disobedience. Doth not the soul know, then? And every hour of those few days tore restlessly at my bewildered and stubborn mind. Does he want meek and docile obedience? Does he want slaves? Does he want shadows and no initiative, no will to do or be or dare? Every day he showed me the glories of the place, every day he told me how they needed workers, devoted ones, etc., etc. "Then Swâmi, why don't you need me to stay and help?" "But the manuscript? You are to work on that." "I have it with me." "The magazine?" "Mrs. Cory will mail it to me as she did when I was in Pittsburgh." "But you have been ill." "I am well now." And on and on,—and the last day, that evening I was to have my final meal with the Swâmi, for he was resolved, it seemed. One of the girls was returning next day to the city, her vacation having ended, had asked the Swâmi to invite me to eat dinner with her in her tent, and he had said I must accept. It was with small grace I accepted so stubbornly her kind gesture. She was a Miss Catherine Nablo, one of the Society's earliest and finest workers. A girl who had in her evening hours after her day's duties, studied book-keeping that she might better serve the interest of the Publication Department, and she had gone faithfully down the years of haphazard records and squared the issue, balanced all accounts and made the Publishing Department a business and a going concern. I think none other so deserved the just commendation that in many instances was slow in forthcoming. Since she had to insist on accuracy from so many untrained but *so willing* workers, ladies sensitive and requiring constant praise for sincere yet so inefficient service. Those who opened the mail failed to enter the invoice, failed to record dates and prices, yet blithely filled the files and under wrong initials. Surely Catherine Nablo served, faithfully restoring disorder into order by the clock. And I am witness to the hours she spent in that Publication Department never leaving before ten, and often midnight to catch a few hours sleep before her duties as office nurse and attendant in her profession. None likes the task-master, and fewer than none can glimpse the faithful service of the one who has to bear the obloquy of perfected work. There was another who trod this path alone. He was Haridâs, the Swâmi's right hand worker at the Ashram. Nablo was of Canadian stock, as he was English out of Guernsey, always right action, rectitude and faithful service through every seeming tangle and misunderstanding. Hers was character and a grand pragmatic vision. To go to Nablo was to find the reason and if fault, she could always simplify the thinking through. The mind was a field,—people tangled not through desire but through lack of information. This night, I did not know then, she too was at the cross roads. She had come to test certain premises and found that for herself life was not to be at the Retreat, and this reasoning, this experience was to be given me that I should decide clearly and be very sure that I desired a *Sannyâsin* path. "Come back to the City with me, Miss Hebard, and think it all over again before you cut every tie." "But they are cut, Miss Nablo, and I am sure." "No one is sure until they return to home ground and see it in perspective." But I was hurt on all sides, from within, and beset from without. We finished dinner and gathered in the Library at Lotus cottage, for the evening with the Swâmi. There may have been sixteen more or less present that evening. I was not acquainted with many beyond an introduction. Some I knew, but my one and dearest friend, Miss Mayson, did not come in. Surly it must be upon my own feet I had to stand. Oh, I heard the Swâmi tell one: "Miss Hebard will attend to that. She is returning tomorrow and can make enquiry." (Whatever it was I don't recall save I could do their errands there). "Are you leaving, Miss Hebard? What train are you taking?" "The milk train, Swâmi, the first one out." "Have you made arrangements with Le Page to take you in to West Cornwall?" "Yes, Swâmi, arrangements are made." "Hm-mm. That is good." After three days I was too beaten to protest, only crawl into my cave when and if I could find it and hide the misery of my baffled mind.

The evening wore on. I sat huddled on the couch, sensitive and proud, as the remarks spun round my dizzy head. Presently "Le Page" came in. One always realized his constant friendship and still the conversation whirred on. Some near note arrested and caught me momentarily out of myself. "But Swâmi, it was thus and so. I cannot square the account—" over some fund information which she required. He, it seemed alone could aid her. I was aware of the matter then. She turned to me and said: "You knew about this, Miss Hebard, did or didn't the Swâmi have the knowledge?" I knew he did, also knew that if the Master chose not to reveal that was purpose enough for me. "No, Miss Nablo, the Swâmi did not know. You have my word." "If you say so, Miss Hebard, it is sufficient. Good night, all." And the gathering broke up. Lanterns were lighted as the campers bade the Swâmi good-night and left for their hill and camp sites. I, too, rose and was withdrawing when the Swâmi said: "Since you are leaving so early, Miss Hebard, I would like a talk with you." I waited and the room cleared.

Then the Teacher came. He sat down close beside me, played lightly with the folds of my *shawl* and drew me out. Just what I had done in leaving, how I had left things there, seemed ready at last to listen and lay aside this game of hide and seek he had been playing; gave me all his reasons, which I knew in my soul every action I had done had squared with. I was young in the Society but I was not utterly bereft of common sense as they had all so insisted during the three day drama ennacted for my testing. That talk with the Swâmi in the quiet of the deserted library will forever remain a part of my deeper self. I realized then how initiation is not of the moment. Initiation carries a living continuity that strengthens and uplifts the mind at every instant of living. It is not a gift, not a grace bestowed like a benediction. It is a stern alignment with the Spiritual Law. An awareness, tenet and title to Reality. One's body of relativity transfers from microcosm to macrocosm; principle becomes alive and that tender nerve that is intuition becomes the Garden where the *Guru* walks within thy speechless inmost Self. It did not mean, this hour with the Swâmi,—how can I translate the untranslatable—an hour in which I seemed to be in the presence of some omniscient, omnipresent Being, that I was never again to lapse, to struggle or to pit my puny Self against the lessons he would impart. My battles were many. My disobediences rang down the years. Wisdom came slowly to an all too eager rebellion. None other would have borne with such a stormy child, but bear he did and gracious to the last. He gave his consent that night and let me stay at the Ashram indefinitely. Nothing final, and so for a few months I learned to live day to day upon the uncertainties of incidence and coincidence. A hard lesson for one of my temperament. When he came at Christmas I delivered to him the manuscript ready for the printer's hands. He was pleased and satisfied with the work.

And he told me of the banners, those banners given him on his Indian trip as awards and appreciation. He had asked me in August when he left would I see about having them framed. This I did before I left, took them to an outstanding art firm and left them in their care. We talked it over and as the gentleman seemed to know better than I, I told him to do them as he would have them done for himself. I paid the amount he asked. I had left the city before they could be delivered. The Swâmi put up quite a protest when I told him what I had done; tried in every way to assure me I had ruined them and had been taken advantage of. "Where is the bill, and what did they charge you?" "The bill is paid, and you have nothing to worry about." "Paid? Paid in advance? Oh, child, what folly—" etc. I was not much disturbed on this score for I know my West, and know the principle upon which our solid business concerns operate. Good work brings more trade than does slack work. We do not bargain. So I was not surprised when the Swâmi wrote me they had been delivered and he had them hung in the Library and found them satisfactory in every way. He always returned and completed in the student's mind these unfinished minutiae.

MY DIARY RECORDS:

Thursday. Feb. 28, 1907: Paid for the Ashram * * Sat. March 2. * * Bought the permanent home for the Society at 135 W. 80th Street.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

This Ashram in the Berkshires! Three hundred and seventy acres of rolling pasture lands and hills, a brook and several springs. Two old New England houses needing only renovation and some remodelling; barns, carriage house, sheds, all made to fit the purpose the Swâmi had in mind. The first year Mr. Le Page built the swimming pool, and what a joy it was to all. There were groves of standing timber, birch, maple, ash, hickory and oak and pine to mention some. A good horse, then followed cows, and fowl, even pigs for marketing. The place within a few years was self-supporting; feed for stock raised on the place. Fruits of many kinds, and a splendid kitchen garden kept the table well supplied for summer guests who came and went the season long. The place was kept very plain, everything simple and the Swâmi's routines for the workers mainly voluntary and in line with training and aptitudes. There always was to be found among the students some one who had training as carpenter, or knew something of the trades. The place was kept in good repair without hired labour. Always there was hard work to be done, always some addition being made, some project under way, nothing ever finished. Season after season the works went on. If ever Karma Yoga maintained a school for study such was here. Sometimes guests would mingle with the workers and share a load or by their too kind willingness disrupt a project or throw the routine out, and within and of these tangles no effort wasted, no lesson spared. We learned our Yogas on our feet in that Lotus Cottage kitchen where centered all the business of house and farm.

At the end of my first month, Miss Mayson was sent upon a mission to the City and I was given full charge of the meals and kitchen. One of the girls in residence, a Miss Margarent Sinnett, volunteered to help me with the dishes. We had, when Miss Mayson left, sixteen to cook for three times daily, counting guest and workers until the season's close about November first. It was something of a problem for a business girl; to plan the menus was in itself no small part. The Swâmi was marvellous in the encouragement he gave, and somehow schedules were met and little went amiss. As my husband often tells me: "In the beginning there are helps—later come the obstacles." Verily I found this so. Many students think an Ashram (Peace Retreat) is where one goes to meditate, to live apart from all activities. I early learned otherwise. Never before was I so involved in activities, and we learned to worship by thinking through our problems at our work. If you would come into the kitchen at early dawn resolved that schedules and planning should meet an ordered fruition, all that day events conspired to thwart your every resolve. To plan at all was to challenge unseen forces and by that very concentration throw athwart your intent, purpose and will. One learned in time to rest in the moment, giving to the universal both rudder and will. Those who were best fitted for the path of reason found their every challenge in work and labour. Those best organized for labour were impelled by hidden forces within themselves to pit their acumen upon the keenest adversary. And the *Bhaktas*—sometimes I think they had the best because they gave the best. To them obedience made all things simple. One thing I must affirm and that is that in the school where spiritual character was being formed, this seminar of the inner living where each student's proclivities, inhibitions and talents were drawn out upon the battle field of Kurukshetra where Lord Krishna symbolized for Arjuna the heights and depths of woe or vision, victory or defeat, so the students at heart felt and understood each other. And when the Swâmi taught us discrimination, the only real defeat any one suffered was in his or her loss of ignorance and vanity. The Swâmi came again for a fortnight the day following the Christmas service at the Society House.

We were seven in that mystic fortnight, the last Christmas I ever spent at the Ashram. The Swâmi brought a guest one Mrs. Thomas. Besides, there were Mr. Wittine (Râmadâs), Miss Sinnett (Saraju), Miss Mayson (Bhavâni), Mr. Le Page (Haridâs), Miss Hebard (Shivâni). On the second Sunday of the New Year, the Swâmi initiated three and gave them their names. Saraju and Shivâni shared the celebration, they were earlier disciples. Those evenings in the quiet, the meals at the Swâmi's table, the talks and the silences were pregnant with other worldliness. The Swâmi's grace was one of the most impressive. I cannot give the Sanskrit. It left us fed before we touched our food. It was not his purpose to say it daily, nothing was to become trite or automatic. It always was a surprise and lifted us out of the ordinary into our inheritances. His voice was deep and sonorous. He made us to share with him the higher identifications. We would not, could not lift our hand to pass the food. One needed prompting. Something to call us back to an alert. It was immanence—no other word. I have heard prayers and benedictions all my life by great and good ones. This was the grace:

> Food is a manifestation of divine energy—Energy is a manifestation of divine power—Power is a manifestation of *Brahman.* All is *Brahman.* He who realizes this gains freedom even in this life. Om Sânti, Om Om!

The gates stood ajar. It was Realization here and now.

There was a fine well, perhaps some two hundred yards from the kitchen, too far to carry the water for the daily tasks. This summer, the Swâmi was expecting a Mr. Everett, an engineer; meanwhile Mr. Le Page dug the trench and before that season's end, we had water in the kitchen. All these businesses and tasks took time and strength, and planning; within and at every turn came the tug-of-war, the *why, the wherefore* that led in the end to concerted action, the lesson and the spiritual application. Oft-times it was years ere the deeper realization dawned upon one.

An old fashioned box stairway opened into the hall leading from the parlour wing to the dining room. Sometimes this was awkard when the workers wished to go from their rooms upstairs directly into the kitchen. So after much deliberation, it was decided. There were some disputes among the carpenter, Le Page and James. But the Swâmi listened, and left the men saying: "I am right." The stringers were reversed and more lumbers were not necessary. So the days and so the lessons! He who linked with axial and tenet usually found release through this maze of opinion and chatter. Sometimes I felt that the dynamic ones, the ones of strong convictions and selfless labour were too sure in themselves. They could not learn the adequacy of soft pedalling. These the ones who always left the place, never by choice, more or less by the law of coincidence, or of some economic or pragmatic need.

The local minister in West Cornwall once asked the Swâmi: "Do you believe in a personal God?" "Yes," answered the Swâmi, "and in an impersonal one." This silenced the prelate. He importuned the Swâmi to attend his services in West Cornwall, but as he did not attend the Swâmi's services at the Ashram, the Swâmi sent his delegates to hear the minister preach. Mr. Le Page drove the group to the village and while they went in to the Services and conveyed the Swâmi's compliments, he remained outside with the horses and the equipage although the minister knew Mr. Le Page well and had many talks with him, this stubborn disciple would not do honour to any cleric who would not honour the Swâmi. He once said to Mr. Le Page: "You use words differently than I do." "Anything wrong with that?" asks the redoutable Thomas. "Oh, no", replied the minister, "only they seem to alter the meaning." Thus this *Jñânin* pressed outward the inner doctrine to dull ears and duller wits. Yet somehow the villagers liked Le Page, inclining him to talk. He had an astute mind and his quick turn of words and meanings in a parlour was repartee. In philosophy his wit and wisdom went swiftly to the pith of the issue. The Ashram walls and roof reverberated when he and the Swâmi were tracing down a meaning or a premise. One never realized the talents pure reasoning could assess or the cohorts streaming to serve those two when they chose to fence. At first it frightened me. I would now that I could myself have joined the frays. They were titanic. None so bold and none so true as those who joined the battles and the contestants. Verily Arjuna and Srî Krishna held the sights and battlements oft and again beneath clear skies and stormy in the Berkshire Hills during those years when the Ashram made history in New England. For miles around the Vedântists were known and after the Swâmi retired there giving the New York Centre into other hands from the Metropolis came many for an hour's conference if no longer could be spared. The journey from the village to the Ashram was much easier when the "motor lorry" as the Swâmi called the automobiles came into use. By horse and buggy it took an hour. The train trip was several hours and to double in one day left short time for interview.

There were, back in the hills, retired from professional life, men and women who were making their homes in the peace of the Berkshires and these often came during the season to the lectures of a Sunday afternoon. Men and women whose names were not unknown in Metropolitan circles. These lectures held beneath the trees were not unlike the Vedic Forest schools held in those ancient Indian days of which we are told in legend and in story. The persisting charm of this most unique of Ashrams lay mostly I believe in the rugged simplicities there. No landscaped lawns, no exotic plants or shrubs, no lily ponds or gardens; a wild old New England farmstead, tilled for use that subsistence and support might derive from the soil; oil lamps, wood fires, rough pasture land surrounded by hills.

and trails, and strong patches waiting the honest touch of labour, and the stern address to industry. He who gave, received. He who served, found. Upon the anvil and the chopping block also men worked his problems out, as in kitchen and dairy the household found its peace. There was no strictly defined schedule save in summer when the boarding guests were there. The Swâmi left much latitude. He never seemed to wish to impress anothers service or his mind. A grand equality and freedom made it as though our personal lives were conjoined one with another into a fraternity and fellowship. Only on general issues did he assume a governorship. Even to the buying of a stove decisions were shared,—or roofs shingled.

In *Leaves of My Diary*, that impressive record which covers the years from 1900 to 1921 and his return to India, the Swâmi speaks of the Ashram in these words: "The Ashram looks like Fairyland." Tears fill my eyes and throat. He had worked so consistently, so tirelessly, so selflessly to make that wilderness productive, then beautiful. It had fulfilled the fondest dream,—the utmost measure,—"and we were not ready"—not sufficient or strong to hold him here, this man from India, Master to needs we knew not yet in suffering or endurance the secret of our actualities. For, only as the candidate demands can the Master become the *Guru* to release us from our tenacities.

To one who is perhaps in even a small way moved to research and interest in the dynasty of Great Ideas such as found their source in the School of Thought Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna left to his Twelve, read when it is published, Swâmi Abhedânanda's *Leaves from My Diary*. Hidden within that record are the hopes of a great over-heart, the faith, the patience and humour that; and if ever an impersonal record could grip and hold the reader to the shining clarity of (and such there truly are) an Abstract Conscience, this daily record covering some twenty years in America. It is in itself a text-book and a technic, and at this far day I seem to be enclosed within the spell of a Presence that is without *absentia.*

In mid-January I was called to New York City to take over the Publication Department at the Society Headquarters at 135 West 81st Street. Called back to the City I occupied the same little room which I had left in September after four months, the longest residence I was ever permitted at the Ashram. It was during these few days (ten to be exact) when I was to become a resident member of the Society House staff that two incidents occurred which I very clearly recall. I took my meals with the Swâmi mainly, I presume, to save the house-keeper, our good Mrs. Robertson, extra service; I sincerely attempted to keep the books for the Publication Department for "Nablo" was resigning. Her task was brought up to date, and she hoped for larger fields. But like myself, who could not add a column of figures twice alike, so others had not qualified. It was at one of our mealtimes that the Swâmi discussed with me *The Servant in the House* by Charles Rann Kennedy, a play which had had a phenomenal run in New York City. Then he told me I should see Barrie's play *The Third Floor Back* which he liked better. Both plays featured the Christ theme, the first as a crusading personality who took over the reconstruction of a clergyman's home and parish; the other, the silent arrival of a traveller who lives so quietly among the tenants of a Cheapside Boarding House in London that his arrival scarcely makes a ripple but in a short time each member of that sorry household finds himself restored to his true Self—the many become as the One, selfless and happy. This small remark of Swâmi's gave me a clear insight into his technics. As the Swâmi's name signifies Oneness, so he taught, so he patiently waited knowing the centre accomplishes its circumference, and when that centre was of Light and selflessness nothing was hopeless, nothing futile.

And the other incident was of the defection of a disciple, one whom I did not know save as a name; and it was over Mrs. Robertson's lament that I protested: "But Swâmi, when one is initiated, one can only wander or delay, one *has* to come back"; and I recall how he looked at me and said: "Yes. They must return." Even if many lives intervene was my unspoken afterthought. The touch, the glimpse cannot be lost.

It was on February first that Mr. Le Page came to the City and we were married. This altered the face of many things. The first and most outstanding repercussion of our marriage brought the Society back to a standard of normalcy, no other thing could have accomplished, so insistent had been the legend "Vedântists do not marry". The West is not monastic minded. The *Dharma* of the Western peoples is "wife and child" returning the long cycle to those Vedic Days when ancient *Rishi* held sway as father, priest and king to his people. There is a prayer of Buddha's given in the *Light of Asia*, Edwin Arnold's matchless story of the Enlightened, which to quote here may not be amissed. Buddha gives instructions to the householder Singala in the art of prayer:

> "Then the World-honoured spake: 'Scatter not rice,
> But offer loving thoughts and acts to all.
> To parents as the East where rises light;
> To teachers as the South whence rich gifts come;
> *To wife and children as the West where gleam.*
> *Colours of love and calm, and all days end;*
> To friends and kinsmen and all men as North;
> To humblest living things beneath, to Saints
> And Angels and the Blessed Dead above;
> So shall all evil be shut off, and so,
> The six main quarters will be safely kept".[1]

Those who have read this book by the Oxford Scholar and an initiate, W. Y. Evans-Wentz, entitled *Tibet's Great*

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[1] Edwin Arnold: *The Light of Asia*, Book the Eighth (1885), p. 234, (The italics are mine).

Yogi Milarepa can perhaps understand by what doctrine of the heart a soul is related to his spiritual teacher and the grand *Sannyâsin* into which a disciple enters. This Ashram of Abhedânanda's livingness beggars description. One left, and came again, but wherever the disciple went, far or near, into the quiet or again into the vortex of intensified activities he carried with him that Ashram in spirit and in fact. By fact I intend there is no possibility of severing one's self. Periodically I found I must return whether by intent or called by the secrecies of some dynamic urge I could neither stem nor fail to heed. I do not believe there was saving twice (when the Swâmi wrote me to come from California and the time from Pittsburgh) any call other than a certain paralysis of the will after long thought upon the dynamics of that place. It was the seat or centre of wisdom, a place where, as Edwin Arnold's poem tells us:

> "The dew is on the Lotus!—Rise great sun!
> And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave—
> *Om Mani Padme Hum*, the sun-rise comes!
> The dewdrop slips into the shining sea".[1]

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1. *bid.*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

After a two weeks' stay in New York City, Mr. Le Page and I went to Pittsburgh for a few weeks visiting my brother and his family, and my mother. As spring advanced, Miss Mayson wrote me of the Swâmi's great need for help with the planting and farm works. Mr. Le Page left at once and I found an opening at my old trade, linotype operator in the City's leading printing house, Murdock Kerr and Co. About mid-May, six weeks after Mr. Le Page left Pittsburgh, the Swâmi asked me to return to take up life again at the Ashram. I did so, expecting it meant permanent residence there. I have written elsewhere the saga of those days. In early July I was again sent to my brother's home and from there sent to my father in California, carrying with me for ever after the trauma of that severance. Surely one learned the law of the West that there is no Ashram, no *Guru,* no teaching save within one's inmost self. To lean, to love, to select, is to add life after life to this sorry trail of bondage. In name, in form, in thought itself one makes his cross, be it iron or gold, idea of fixation. And so I renewed my silent vow swearing allegiance to the meaning within the Law; resolved no word, no sound, no identification with premise or with person should ever command me to an issue. Only in the silence, yea even in the absence of Light as opposed to darkness, as I came to know during the years on the Mesa here at Abhedânanda Acres, must I learn to find my prompting and my surety.

Our son was born in my father's home in California. We called him 'Kâli'. The Swâmi added "dâsa" entering him into the Order of Srî Râmakrishna. That winter was a strange interlude for both my husband and myself. Three thousand miles of space and in time we were five days apart. Yet there is neither space nor time in philosophy, in thought and in the spirit. There is a plane of living within the self which parallels all incidents and passages in time, a suspended appreciation, inarticulate save in the awarenesses of the heart and mind. Therein I slowly learned to live and find my being.

They told me that during this winter a Swâmi Bhumânand of another order of the Swâmis visited the Ashram. At the time there were very few workers there, and his few days were revealing and beneficial. He asked to visit the place and the Swâmi sent him. He, needing rest, desired also to see first hand this grafting of a spiritual way of life upon Western mores. For Sister Bhavâni he explored many difficulties and gave her instruction enabling her to carry on the *dhyânas* (meditation) to which she was committed. There often come intervals in the soul when smooth sailing for no reason whatsoever ceases, and one faces a deadlock, some tangle that tightens with every effort to break through. Sister told me this good Swâmi steadied her directionals. He also told her that Swâmi Abhedânanda was one of the very great and rare spiritual teachers of the Age and that the work he was doing was known to the Great Ones, those Hierarchies where so few had contact, and whatever came of test or trial to cling steadfast to her path come death even.

Of Haridâs, Swâmi Bhumânand was confounded to learn he had wife and child, so clear and unconfused he found this disciple's way of life and learning. I cannot recall all that Sister said to me. Bhumânand seemed to feel deeply the great devotion of Haridâs to his *Guru*, found such love and service very rare in this nation and in this age. It has been said our Swâmi taught as do some of the Great Ones. It was thus Marpo trained the Yogî Milarepa and I learned later that the Swâmi had definite leanings toward the Tibetan Vedânta, those stern cold measurings of stature, to the Law, halfway efforts wasted precious time, thine and the Lord's; "life was earnest—life was real" to Abhedânanda. Bodies do not come easily nor the incidence and coincidence of spiritual opportunities in this life. That one shall not "slazy" along the way; 'work, work, work' is the secret doctrine of all enlightenment. Once the glimpse, serve thy alignments and thy commitments and be done with the loitering. The soul is strong, the spirit free. Know this in woodshed, kitchen, temple garden or the world. The Yogas are the four square tower that scales the heights and lifts the heart through right effort to the firmament. The good Swâmi Bhumânand after his few days' visit left with the disciples a new accord and a heightened courage. It fortunately came during one of these depressions to which the spirit of man is prone, when the keener the struggle upward the more poignant and farther the pendulum swings.

Before I resume the story of events I will tell here of several episodes told me later.

A lady guest leaving the Ashram timed her departure so as to travel with the Swâmi from West Cornwall to New York. The luggage was in the carriage and Mr. Le Page with them having been commissioned to make a purchase in the village, measurements for which he had to get at Peace Cottage. They were to wait for him while he walked the short distance from the top of the lane to the Cottage. Imagine his consternation upon returning to find carriage, passengers and horses out of sight. They had not considered service even worth the hire of waiting. He walked into town four miles, found the horses and carriage tied near the station, train and passengers gone. He drove back, stabled the horses and had his hours for reflection. Later the Swâmi explained. "Mrs.— prevailed upon me to go on." Such are the makings of what—patience? Possibly. Let the reader solve these cross-word puzzles that take place within the milieu of those inner worlds wherein the drama of meanings find their stage. The entry in *My Diary* reads: "Wed-

Oct. 27, 1909 * *. Left Ashram with Mrs. B—in the new survey. Left Le Page behind without seeing him."

That was the winter of one of Connecticut's big storms. It was the Swâmi's custom to spend two weeks of the mid-winter at the Ashram, taking a brief respite from platform, lectures, classes and the Society activities to check the progress and the work at the Ashram and rest a bit by his own fireside. The storm had drifted some three feet of snow over hillside pasture and road. Over this had formed a sheet of ice and the second fall was four feet making a solid seven feet on the roads. No one dreamt the Swâmi would come if he could or could if he would. This winter there were several workers in residence besides Sister Bhavâni and Haridâs. The lady also was there who acted as managing housekeeper. She answered the telephone about mid-morning, the Swâmi was calling from West Cornwall. "Why is no one here to meet me? Come at once. I am waiting." "There are seven feet of snow, Swâmi. It is not possible." "Come at once. Tell Le Page." Always Le Page when the thing was insurmountable. Are heroes made or born, the mind is prone to ask. Well, this time he refused. "I shall not stir. Let him use common sense. There is a hotel." And so the little Sister said: "You go at once for the Swâmi; harness the horse to that sled and go." Still he refused; it was not practical nor safe; the horse could easily be injured and the Swâmi frozen or upset. All good judgement was with the disciple this time. Mr. Le Page was Guernsey English—Guernsey French. He had the will of both Johnny Bull and Lafayette in the makings of his thinking. He would dare the impossible if there was cause. This to him was dire unreason, and he could hold in any fire-giving reason against all. He had built the sled, he had managed and cared for the horses for two years, and he loved and honoured the Swâmi too much to risk life and property entrusted to his care. He simply would not accept such a responsibility. Again the phone: "Where is Le Page? Is he coming?" "No", the women answered, "he says no. It is not feasible, not practicable and not safe." "Tell him to come", and the phone hung up. Out marches Miss Mayson (Sister Bhavâni) and the other managing lady, refusing to stir from the barn until Le Page is on his way. Two women and the Swâmi,—well, reason capitulated. Le Page harnesses the team, he stowes away lengths of rope and a shovel in the sled and is on his way. The trip in is not too bad. The Swâmi greets him with a grunt of appreciation or an air of "I told you so—you could make it." None too assured with an added passenger, they make their start. The return trip was accomplished. The Swâmi, the strategist, left the tactics to his *chelâ*. Only once was he obliged to leave the sled while a difficult curve was negotiated, and the horses freed of the shafts guided by a rope. Horses have a psychology of their own. They will pull under difficulty when free of shafts. One must know, seemingly trivial to us, these things that are pressure and often panic to an animal. A man himself refuses to undertake what he cannot see his way to accomplish. Tactics are the mechanics and operations of a mission. The mind demands to work within the law of possibility. Interval and the issue must coincide. That morning a neighbour had dug his horses out of the drifts at a place perhaps two miles from the village. These were the events against which the Swâmi must knowingly or unknowingly—(who can say?) pit his strength and his commands.

Upon this episode the Swâmi commented under date of March 16, 1916: "Wed. Sunny and cold. Thur. 18. Left N. Y. by 9 : 02 A.M. train from 125th Str. Station—arrived at W. Cornwall at 1 : 30 P.M. Had to wait until 3 : 00 P.M. when Le Page came with the sleigh to meet me. The road was very bad with snow drifts. Arrived at the Ashram after 5 : 00 P.M."

A young woman student and friend of mine was guest at the Ashram when the Swâmi received my sister's letter telling of the birth of Kâlidâs. Tears filled his eyes as he turned to this student and said: "The hope of America lies in her children." Thus again the echo of the Buddha's prayer: "To wife and children as the West where gleam colours of love and calm, and all days end"; surged through me when I read the Master's words as the letter from my friend recorded them.

The Swâmi wrote me upon receipt of my sister's letter renaming the child Kâlidâsa. I had given him the Swâmi's birth name, Kâli. Kâlidâsa is more fitting. It means: "Servant of the Divine Mother", were his words. He told me of the passing away of Miss Sinnett in August 1910. She was Sister Saraju, a grand sweet soul. I was shocked at this news as indeed were they all at the Ashram. The sudden development of a hidden malady—the Swâmi and Mr. Le Page visited her twice at the hospital at Great Barrington where she was taken when stricken. She lived but a few weeks. Death comes to Vedântists as doth birth and marriage. None can escape the *dharma* of the West and none can escape the grief of parting. Saraju was one of the early ones to come to the Ashram. She was an artist in oils and had made some studies while there that had something more than the copyist's touch from nature. The Swâmi let her brother have them all when he came, so overwhelmed was this boy by his sister's death. "He should have left you one, Swâmi, for the place." "He was very much broken and did not think," was Swâmi's answer to me the following year when I had returned to the Ashram at his request. The Swâmi held a memorial service at the Ashram for Miss Sinnett with those who were there. The girl was sincerely loved and had been a very integral part of the household. She had been a good friend to me, always sparing me work when others were blind to the pressures on my strength. How often she had filled the wood box, taking loads from my arms and remonstrating that I must not overdo. Always the onerous task, the heavy end of the day's allotted chores she singled to herself and accomplished with dispatch. She was no learner; a valiant soldier in the household, and she was one of Swâmi's most obedient and loving disciples. She never questioned his instructions or commands,—a lovely spirit.

In May 1911 I came East at Swâmi's instigation and his specific command, bringing our tiny son, the first baby ever in residence to the Ashram. I would put him in his go-cart beside the kitchen-door and he would follow the Swâmi with his eyes until he had passed out of sight. The Swâmi would say "Hi" and baby gurgled back. It was a lovely sight and charmed all who saw. The days passed much too fast. One Sunday morning during these few brief weeks and before the summer guests arrived, the Swâmi christened our little son. My mother had come to West Cornwall to relieve me of the baby's care that I might give full time in the Ashram kitchen, so needing workers. The Apostle took the little lad into his arms, blessed and named him, and made my mother godmother. It was a very lovely consecration. Wild white daisies, the flower of childhood, were in profusion. These, as I remember, were our only decoration. When I first requested the Swâmi to make this christening he said "it was not necessary" but would gladly do so if I wished it, and I did. Somehow it has seemed to me that roots *do* go down into the intangibles when birth and death make their accords with life.

I was at the Ashram in the summer of 1911 and during my stay there a boarding guest came to spend a few days pleading rest and change as the incentive of her visit. She spent a great deal of time in her quarters which were spacious as she occupied the best suite. But after a day or so grape-vine was reporting the unusual questions this lady asked—things pertinent and different to those enquiries prompted of a desire to know the premise and truth. About the third day the Swâmi accosted her and asked if she were an agent from some press. She admitted this was so, refused to give up her scripts or show them to him, thus her stay came to an abrupt end. It was not that the Press was unwelcome—publicity was not shunned, but the stealth of this invasion into our cloisters was not fair. Strangely she entitled her article *The Heathen Invasion* and it appeared in the columns of the *Hampton Columbian Magazine* later in the year. It was the most scurrilous and dishonest attack ever written of any Movement or Leader, one of those flash estimates revelatory of a writer's own superficial arrogancies. It was akin to the Mayo reports of India, somewhat of the dead end tendency without the spirit of what Theodore Rossevelt called the period of muckraking,—yellow journalism. The young students were greatly incensed as were those keepers of the Ashram whose lives were moral and intelligent expression of the spiritual selflessness of Vedânta which was the Apostle's constant instruction. The unpleasant incident is long forgotten. The Idea is that Vedânta persists.

In mid-July we sent forth again to seek our fortunes in the world. Another nut to crack, one which is still slow in the cracking. With all the plans for householder disciples there to be none, it seems. The next eighteen months were checkered ones. As Swâmi's needs at the Ashram developed through shortage of men at haying time or getting in the wood for winter, spring ploughing, etc., Mr. Le Page would return periodically to help. Always "if he is not working" the Swâmi would enquire. Then through some good fortune I found a position at the Princeton University Press as proof-reader and editor. Here I moved the family, my mother and I, and I worked there for four years. Four other children were born to us, two of whom we buried in infancy. Once more after five years I tried to go again to the Ashram. This time on my own. I did not ask nor was I called. I reasoned that if my husband was so needed I would at least be near him. The children were growing fast. It was another very mistaken venture. It took long experiences to make me realize that there was another mission for the West than Ashram and Monastery and that household disciples had a defined path to position in this philosophy of renunciation.

During the pre-Princeton days while we were still living in New York City, Mr. Le Page disappeared from home for three days. My mother and I were very much alarmed for he was a man of responsibility and devotion. Towards sundown on the third day, I found him home on my return from office. He had walked nearly all the way from New York City to West Cornwall, perhaps ninety miles. When near his destination, within fifteen miles, he decided may be it was not a "call", and he walked back again, only to find upon his arrival a letter from the Swâmi in that evening's post asking him if he could "come for a few weeks and help, if he were not working." Next morning he took the early train. He was with the Swâmi all that winter, helping with the farm. What is a *chelâ,* after all, I ask. I seem to see it in my later years very clear, and to me the far-reaching mission of the Vedânta, that to be in truth a Monist, a student of the grand Advaita principles, can one retire to Monastery, retreat or Ashram and a life of world renunciation and be consistent? Is that the meaning of spirituality? Is it to give up activity, responsibility, involvements in the world and all for which the social order stands to keep our nation strong, our race a race of envisioned men and women? Leaders in the good *dharma* of the West? I can refuse to live, narrow all the margins of phenomena and seek realization in a cave or in the forest. Has not the West the closing of the cycle? Shall not the disciple, the *chelâ* carry within himself that self-same forest, that cave, that Ashram? Live the *Gitâ* tenet through form, and in battle fight the good fight yet fight not? So live that the stratospheres within positive principle and resolve find in every word and deed the meaning for their being?

We came west to California in December 1916 after our last and final exodus from the Ashram in the Berkshire Hills of Connecticut. We eventually settled in South Los Angeles where the Swâmi visited us later on one of his lecturing trips to the Coast. I remember attending the lectures given in Los Angeles in the Coulter Building and in Symphony Hall on Hill Street, occasionally in the class meetings. My mother and my sister also attended some of his class-lectures and had interviews with the Swâmi. Mr. Le Page advised against affilliating with the Society in Los Angeles. We were older students and he wished us to live very simply within the inner Ashram our household life had become. New faces and new involvements would be distracting. The children were growing and our two youngest born within these years.

Once again, the Swâmi visited us in the little home during his last year in America spent on this Coast. After the closing of the Ashram Sister Bhavâni came to make her home with us. All our five children had Swâmi's blessing. One Mr. Goldsmith brought the Swâmi to see us on two occasions. On one of these was with him a Madam Bergman, a Swedish woman, and a very real student, the only one we met competent to carry on the Swâmi's classes in his absence. She had great understanding. But the classes did not long survive his departure. Too many wanted power and prestige. Madam had nothing to give them but wisdom gleaned from the *Gitâ.* Young students will not concede to one among them, the standing of a prophet. She was too titanic for them to grasp. When all want to teach, who remains to be taught? Los Angles is and always has been a gathering place for the idle of mind, the curious, the restless and there is strong current toward the psychic. The spiritualists and mediums and readers seem to satisfy them best. So much so did the Swâmi himself find this to be the case that during his days in Southern California he attended many seances taking several students with him. "We will investigate this Spiritualism and learn its worth." In one seance where a well-known medium was in a trance, she exclaimed: "I can do nothing. The Thinking Box is present." So the Swâmi was the Thinking Box. But he was earnest. He said to the effect that if the people want Spiritualism let us learn about it, and give them what they want. I met in our neighbourhood some Advantists who invited him to their meeting, which he attended one Sunday afternoon and in courtesy they in turn attended his evening lecture. They were impressed rather grimly, so they put up defences lest some inadvertent moment should open their reason to capitulation.

I remember well the lecture on February 10, *What Happens to the Dead?* It confirmed an experience I had following the death of our infant son back in Princeton. I saw the ectoplasm, I presume, the disembodied soul. Of this experience I had never had occasion to speak with the Swâmi and at the time of its occurrence I was badly shaken and knew not how to regain my normalcy when this realization, call it as you will, was vouchsafed me. One would expect to see a child-angel, or some cherubim form of a two week's infant in such an appearance. What appeared to me was a wraith-like form, the face of a man, not an infant; strong, ageless, and with only one eye in the centre of the forehead. The only form that of a tapering cloud-veil on the general outline suggestive of a man seeming to reach from ceiling to floor nearly seven feet or more. It remained suspended before me, conveying to me the very solid impression, that there *was no death, no infancy or age,* and that I could rest. Immortality was an ever present fact. Then slowly the visitation vanished. I was most confounded when three years later in this lecture the Swâmi gave description so exactly as had appeared to me in Princeton that the experience seemed reenacted before me.

On the first occasion of the Swâmi's visit to our house, the children were all with us at table and had had many admonitions to proper and sedate behaviour. Kâlidâs was in his eighth year, Edgar five, and Sitâ three. Little restless witches that took combined dynamite on Grandma's, their father's and my part to keep within any bounds, but at table they did pretty well. The Swâmi certainly was in a brown study parts of that afternoon and evening. He was good and very gracious staying on so we could visit after the youngsters were in bed. It was the only time I ever had the great honour of offering him a meal in our own home. Distances were far. We had no car, and his lecture programmes were extensive. The children were delighted with the Swâmi. Sitâ has never forgotten that he took her in his arms and kissed her. She was won indeed. Kâlidâs was all eager and rather dominated the scene. So I asked Edgar: "Did the Swâmi say anything to you, or you to him?" He was quiet a moment. Then said: "Why, Mama, at table I looked at the Swâmi and he smiled at me, and I smiled at Swâmi."

When next the Swâmi came it was for calls after Sister Bhavâni was living with us following the closing of the Ashram in Connecticut. He gave her instructions and to find for himself just how her health was adjusting to the world after so many years living in the Ashram quiet. I think he was satisfied. On one of these calls, he drew me aside in the garden—the rooms were small and there were many of us. "I want to tell you, Mrs. Le Page, do not forget. There will be a spiritual wave starting in Los Angeles & San Diego and extending as far as Seattle in the North and from this Coast it will innundate the world."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Swâmi spent almost a year on the Pacific Coast, dividing his time between San Francisco and Los Angeles and testing and examining the growth of the work before his taking passsage to India. He had been for so many years a resident in the West he needed conditioning before setting into the tropical heat of Calcutta direct from the severe Eastern winters. He was in San Francisco, lecturing in the fall of 1920 when my mother died five weeks after our youngest son, Râma, was born. Events crowded fast and thick upon the family. The Swâmi never seemed far away, East or West, but for the next few years with a family never less than eight, usually nine or ten—someone always coming or going—we failed to keep in close contact with the Swâmi as we should have done perhaps. These years were lived very much as those of any other normal busy household. Our ups and downs break the monotony of the years. He seemed no farther to us when he left for India than when in West Cornwall or in San Francisco. Letters certainly passed as often as when in the States. He visted us once again before he sailed for India. He saw our youngest child. I told him it seemed as though the new baby had brought us some success. We now had our first automobile. He looked at me and said: "Yes, each child brings its own support." I have not forgotten.

He wrote to Sister and to us en route upon that return home to Mother India, from Honolulu and from a Japanese port of call. He sailed in July 1921, and he records: "I sailed from San Francisco and crossed the the Pacific Ocean, breaking my voyage at Honolulu, where I was a delegate from India at the 'Pan-Pacific Educational Conference.' Then, I came to Japan and studied Japanese culture, philosophy and religion, stopping at Shanghai, Hong-Kong, Canton, Manila and Singapore, where I delivered the message of Vedânta philosophy in popular lectures. From Singapore I was invited to Kuala-Lumpur in the Malaya States, where I gave a series of lectures on *Confucianism, Buddhism,* and *Taoism* before Chinese and Hindu audiences. From there I was invited to Rangoon, where after delivering several public lectures on the *Message of Buddha* and on *Religion of the Hindus,* I returned to Calcutta."

He returned to India at the especial request of Swâmi Brahmânanda to take over the Vice-Presidency and government of the Belur Math and to give to the Indian Monastery and Headquarters the benefit of his experience in the West. And this added to his eminence and prestige as co-worker of Swâmi Vivekânanda and his own long years of study in scholarship and world wide philosophy. Mind you, this Apostle stood in the academic world of thought equal to all and second to none, and he was authority in the Vedânta philosophy and religion. We next learned of this trip into the Himâlayas. "In 1922," he records, "I went to Tibet from Kâshmere, crossing the Himâlayas on foot, to study the manners, customs and the Buddhistic philosophy and Lâmâism which prevail among the Tibetan Lâmâs. I went along Yarkand Road, the highway to Europe and stopped at 'Leh,' the capital of Lâdâk, in Western Tibet. My destination was 'Hemis Monastery' about twenty-five miles north of the City of Leh."

Of this monastery the Russian writer, Notovitch, in his work entitled *The Unknown Life of Christ,* has written extensively. Those who have read this work and considered soberly its strange intriguing research, and which no scholar has been able to refute, may realize it was no idle quest as a historian that led our Apostle to take this journey to that monastery perhaps to verify and confirm what had been published by Notovitch.

During the years 1912-1916 while engaged in my duties at Princeton University Press some research which came to my attention reawakened my interest in a remark I had once heard the Swâmi make from the platform to the effect that the years preceding Christ's ministry had been said to have been spent in India with the Yogis of Tibet. I wrote the Swâmi regarding this and at the same time I wrote a Dr. Miller who had had the Chair in Church History at the Princeton University. Dr. Miller replied that he knew of no historical record so stating. The Swâmi wrote telling me to read the Russian writer, Notovitch's *The Unknown Life of Christ.* I was at that time unable to find a copy but several years later procured a copy in the Los Angeles City Library. The work is now out of print.[1]

Later on there will be another mention regarding this research of Swâmi's in which the author has always had a keen interest. Monism is the hidden doctrine not yet accepted by the Christian writers nor the adherents of the Church. It is this doctrine of Monism which will bring into harmony the equity and faith of man. This the grand thesis which Christ could not "put over"—owing to the desire for and reliance upon a transcendent messiahship rather than the principle of immanence in the spiritual destiny of man at the time He taught. Not even the Apostles could grasp the idea of resurrection save as the body gave evidence. Thus 2000 years of "miracles" have kept alive the belief and faith of man, while Christ our Lord returned to the Father which is in heaven.

Upon Swâmi's return to Calcutta from Tibet we were astounded to learn that he had to begin from the foundations. Reports came to us that changes made in the administration of affairs at the Belur Math since the departure of Swâmi Brahmânanda and the passing of Swâmi Vivekânanda were not along the lines the First Apostle had laid down as founder of the Mission and the Swâmi was not in accord with these innovations; so he quietly withdrew and established his independent Centre. Rather than disturb by any drastic restoration he stepped aside as years ago in America (New York) younger Swâmis could have wished him to do. So "in 1923", he records, "after returning from Tibet, I established the Râmakrishna Vedânta Society in Calcutta of which I am the President. In 1924, I opened a branch of this Society at Darjeeling under the name of Râmakrishna Vedânta Ashram." The Swâmi records nothing of the injustices worked against him, nothing of the disappointments inflicted by his own people East or West. He begins again, lays anew the corner-stones and foundations of his work in the city of his birth as testimony to his great Master. He builds a school in the Darjeeling Ashram dedicated to Niveditâ, the forgotten disciple of his *Gurubhâi;* she who had elevated India in Western eyes and served the cause of education and culture there. Thus he remembers and remembering the honoured India's patriot-saint, often, he has said "the great Vivekânanda". Readers accept, and as has been said earlier in these pages, many of us only knew Vivekânanda through our teacher, and many too contentedly settle in the shadow of the "great Vivekânanda" overlooking entirely the spirit of the man who made Vivekânanda live in tenure and in premise. The Apostle underwrote with more than forty years of labour in the memory of Vivekânanda, and kept alive and shared with us those unforgettable memories of closest comradeship in their seminar of spiritual philosophy. Twin minds—twin Apostles who from the gardens of the

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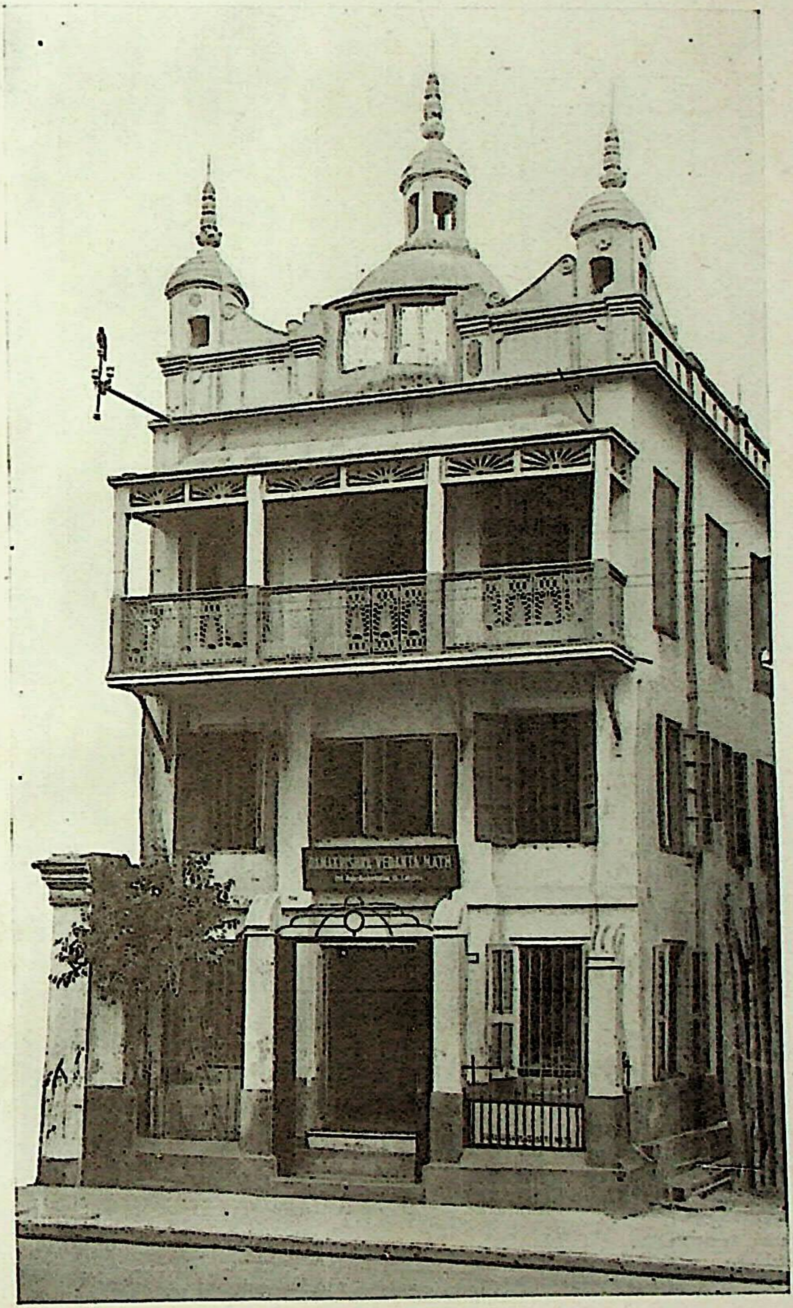
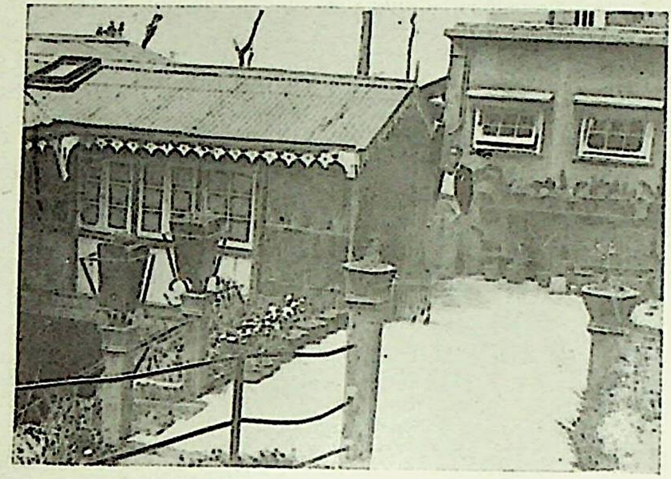
[1] A copy was still later presented to me. This together with other priceless treasures and a rare Library were lost in the fire which destroyed our home in 1943.



Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta

(Front View)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling



The Swami's Room

Nivedita Memorial Building

Bhagavân paved the way for India into the hearts and minds of the West. Few recognize the gruelling demands made upon the strength and stamina of Abhedânanda's pioneering of 'the young movement' in the West, where he established Indian thought and culture, organized not only the headquarters of the movement from which stemmed centres East and West along the years, but also broke the mental barriers, explored and extended the reason that Western scholars took new soundings, revised their philosophies, thesis and their religious outlook. The *Sannyâsins*, the Swâmis of a younger generation coming out of India would have found small welcome in America without this Apostle's grand American mission. For the same spirit with which he examined every doubt, every dogma and every philosophical tenet he dared the re-stoning in Chicago streets, and the division of loyalties among his own, and us. This was not alone a conviction in his own spiritual inheritance, to this was added a complete knowledge of the human mind and an assured faith in the ultimate goodness of mankind.

Pressed by the importuning of Brahmânanda our Swâmi returned to India. I am repository of a discussion which lasted for days, held with Sister Bhavâni in which he analyzed and tested from every angle the poignancy of this call, before he took any measures to close his Ashram in the Berkshires,—that garden within a garden where he built to make ready a new Twelve to carry on the message of Srî Râmakrishna. Abhedânanda was the youngest of the Bhagavân's Twelve *Sannyâsin* disciples. What a hope to complete the cycle and leave another Twelve men of education and stern address to that flashing Monism of the East, men of indomitable will and vision to orient all that is resilient and young in the West! A new *Upanishad* articulating, for the message of Srî Râmakrishna taught no boundaries. But it was finished—the dream and the vision. The Apostle returned to India, working on in the city of his birth and as none but he could, closing in the days of Srî Râmakrishna's grand mission. The work goes on, the ripples break the surface of the sea. Men find peace and the centres magnify. The last of the Great Ones has passed into history. The ebb and flow of tides beyond men's ken stir the world to new dreams of universal accord. Yet not until the Apostle carved deep into the mind of the Western world the vision and the reason that is the divine Monistic Advaita Vedânta, did he yield his will to the call of Mother India. His Twelve are yet to come for the spirit that was Abhedânanda is not departed from among us. He lives in more than name and form—he is *Guru* and axis to our living.

EPIGRAMS ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND IMMORTALITY.

"By the realization of the true Self, through constant hearing, concentration and meditation, Self-knowledge and immortality will be gained".—Swâmi Abhedânanda's lecture, *Immortality and the Self* in *Self-Knowledge.*

"This Infinite Being appears in two aspects, the universal, which is called *Brahman*, and the individual, which is called the Self or Atman."—*Ibid.*

"By right discrimination and analysis we can differentiate the knower from the object of knowledge."—*Ibid.*

"The Self or knower cannot be comprehended by intellect; it is incomprehensible."—*Ibid.*

"The Self cannot perish; it is immortal."—*Ibid.*

"Self-knowledge being the goal of life, by that alone we can understand the universe, how it has come into existence, why it stands, and where it will go after dissolution."—*Ibid.*

"By knowing our true Self we can know what will become of all phenomena at the time of the general involution, and if we wish to become immortal, we must know this self or Atman; there is no other way to immortality."—*Ibid.*

EPIGRAMS ON SPIRIT AND MATTER.

"In science and philosophy * * matter is that unknown substance out of which all phenomenal forms are fashioned."—*Ibid.*

"Matter is that substance of the universe which makes up the objective world."—*Ibid.*

"Spirit is the perceiver and knower, while matter is that which is perceived, sensed and known."—*Ibid.*

"Vedânta teaches that the eternal Substance is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. Although it is one, still it appears as many by its inscrutable power known in Vedânta as *Mâya*."—*Ibid.*

"The ego is the image of that Divine spark within us which gives it vitality and makes it do all works mental and physical." —Lecture: *Knowledge of the Self*, in *Self-Knowledge.*

"Self knowledge alone helps us to realize the Absolute Truth and to attain perfection. It is considered to be the highest wisdom."—*Ibid.*

"If we wish to know God we must first know our true Self."—*Ibid.*

"The true self is the centre of the universe."—*Ibid.*

"There is only one Infinite Existence which expresses itself through finite forms."—*Ibid.*

"As finite forms, existing in space, cannot live outside of it, so all these various individuals live in and through that infinite space of Reality which is called the absolute Self."—*Ibid.*

"Hatred proceeds from imperfect relative knowledge, which makes us perceive objects as separate from one another."—*Ibid.*

EPIGRAMS ON ONENESS OR UNITY: ETHICS OF VEDANTA.

"True love means the expression of oneness".—Lecture: *Knowledge of the Self*, in *Self-Knowledge.*

"As love for body makes us feel one with the body, so love for the true Self makes us feel one with the true Self; and if we see that Self in others, we cannot help loving them as we love our Self. Now we understand the meaning of 'Love thy neighbour as thy self.' It is not an extraordinary teaching. Vedânta has always taught this truth. People of the Western world say that Christ was the only one who ever taught in this way, but they do not know that this is the very foundation of the ethics of Vedânta".—*Ibid.*

"When all beings appear as parts of one universal Self, there is neither delusion, nor fear, nor sorrow, because there can exist no other thing outside of Self or *Atman* for which one can grieve or for which one can suffer."—*Ibid.*

"Sorrow and fear arise so long as there is the sense of duality or multiplicity."—*Ibid.*

"If all objects of fear and sorrow become one with the all-pervading Divine Self, then fear and sorrow must vanish."—*Ibid.*

"The word *Kavi* means poet and also means the seer of things. Self is described as the greatest poet of the universe."—*Ibid.*

"The absolute Self is above all relativity; therefore it is above good and evil, beyond virtue and vice."—*Ibid.*

"Vedânta tells us to realize the individual knower first; then will the Knower of the universe be known."—*Ibid.*

"The *Atman* has no cause, yet it is the cause of all; and at the same time is beyond the law of cause and effect."—*Ibid.*

"It (*Atman*) is its own cause; in it cause and effect are identical.

"They alone are truly happy who have become absolutely free from fear."—*Ibid.*

"All fear is conquered when Self-knowledge is gained."—*Ibid.*

"Ignorance is the mother of selfishness."—*Ibid.*

"Self-knowledge is the only source of happiness; it will lead to perfection and freedom."—*Ibid.*

"You are a part of Divinity. Feel it, realize it, and all * * * ties will drop away and you will be free."—*Ibid.*

"The attainment of this freedom through Self-Knowledge will bring to you the realization of your oneness with Divinity."—*Ibid.*

EPIGRAMS ON PRANA AND THE SELF.

"Self is the centre of the universe as well as the centre of each one of us."—Swâmi Abhedânanda: *Self-Knowledge.*

"Self is the origin of the phenomenal universe."—*Ibid.* ......

"*Prâna* or self-consciousness is not many, * * It is one."—*Ibid.*

"As life-force is one, so self-consciousness is one."—*Ibid.*

"The *Prâna* or life-force, which is inseparable from intelligence and self-consciousness, is imperishable, immortal and blessed, that is the true Self."—*Ibid.*

"True Self is not increased by good acts nor decreased by evil deeds."—*Ibid.*

"The true Self is neither virtuous nor sinful, but it is always divine and perfect."—*Ibid.*

"Good and evil deeds affect the ego, the doer and the actor, and bring in return the results which the ego reaps."—*Ibid.*

"The source of consciousness and intelligence is the guardian of the world, the producer of all phenomena of the universe, and that is 'My true Self'."—*Ibid.*

"The best teacher is he who directs his students step by step in the path of realization and who makes them investigate the truth by their own exertion".—Lecture: *Search After the Self* in *Self-Knowledge.*

"The life of the body is nothing but a series of deaths or changes."—*Ibid.*

"The ruler of this body is the Self, while the body is its abode. This formless Self dwells in the body for a time, and after leaving it remains formless."—*Ibid.*

"As all the imperceptible forces can be perceived by the senses under certain conditions, so the *Atman* or true Self, although imperceptible by nature, manifests its power and intelligence through the form of the physical body."—*Ibid.*

"As an ignoramus cannot distinguish the wind clouds and electricity from ethereal space, so a self-deluded soul cannot distinguish the true Self from the material organism."—*Ibid.*

"Wherever intelligence, life-force or any kind of activity is to be found, there is the expression of the Self."—*Ibid.*

"No knowledge is possible without self-consciousness."—*Ibid.*

"In Vedânta, these two, intelligence and *prâna,* are described as the ultimate generalizations of all phenomena of the universe; and they proceed from the Cosmic Self or *Brahman,* which is the source of all knowledge and of the activity of mind and senses."—*Ibid.*

"Before we can comprehend the spirit of any scriptural text we shall have to realize the Truth described in it."—Lecture on *Realization of the Self* in *Self-Knowledge.*

"That intelligent Self, which is the source of consciousness and knowledge, must be known as the director of the mind and senses."—*Ibid.*

"When we have realized the cause of self-consciousness, we have understood the power which directs the mind."—*Ibid.*

"When the consciousness of the immortal Self is gained all fear vanishes."—*Ibid.*

"The Self is the thinker of thoughts."—*Ibid.*

"Mind can only think when directed by the Self who is beyond all thoughts."—*Ibid.*

"That apperception by which we know that we do not know this thing proceeds from the Self. Therefore, the Self is neither known nor unknown, but beyond relative knowledge and ignorance."—*Ibid.*

"God is in reality beyond our conception of good, which is relative and limited.."—*Ibid.*

"That Self which is in us and makes us speak and pray is different from that which we worship with prayers."—*Ibid.*

"There is a saying: 'When God is known He is no longer God, He is our imagination.' The absolute Divinity is different from that which is worshipped."—*Ibid.*

"That something which is the director of the mind does not dwell in one place; it is beyond the space relation."—*Ibid.*

"Behind * * intellectual perception there is the self-consciousness of the ego. If the ego be unconscious, if there be no sense of 'I', then these vibrations will come through the senses and pass away without producing any sensation in the mind. Again, if the mind be separated from the source of apperception and intelligence, then the sensations will remain in the subconscious mind without affecting the ego. This source of consciousness in us is the Knower. It is our true Self."—*Ibid.*

"According to Monistic Vedânta the true nature of the Self or *Atman* or *Brahman* is absolute knowledge or absolute intelligence, which never changes."—*Ibid.*

"The knower of knowledge cannot be known by any other knowledge."—*Ibid.*

"The nature of the Self is all-knowing; its knowledge does not depend upon the relation between the knower and the object of knowledge but * * remains unchanged even when all the objects of knowledge have ceased to exist."—*Ibid.*

"Self-knowledge and existence are one and the same."—*Ibid.*

"The knower of the Absolute and Immortal Self becomes one with it and remains as the immortal and perfect spirit forever and ever."—*Ibid.*

"Spiritual strength which Self-knowledge brings, makes one free from birth and death."—*Ibid.*

"Infinite Being appears in two aspects, the universal, which is called *Brahman*, and the individual which is called the Self or *Atman*."—*Immortality and the Self*, in "*Self-Knowledge.*"

"By right discrimination and analysis we can differentiate the knower from the object of knowledge."—*Ibid.*

PART FOUR

IDENTIFICATIONS

"Measure not with words the Immeasurable."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

"The laws of the universe have their own sanction."—Geo. F. Hoare.

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord."—*Psalm*, CXII, 7.

This is introductory to a chapter of the sweetest intimacies and experiences of the initiates and their Master. I have been requested in writing this story of the Apostle to leave out no slightest word or tenet of the Teacher, nor to omit any of those tender instructions given to us in the practice of our *dhyânas*. This I find impossible to do owing first to the reticences of the disciples and secondly to the fact that one cannot truly articulate the passage of inner values into their realizations. But I have recorded much that is self-evident and translatable even to those readers who are not familiar with the inner doctrines of the "Noble Eightfold Path" or of the applied psychology of the Yogas as administered by the Great Ones, and touched mostly upon those intuitive revelations as they followed the Apostle's spiritual direction and guidance. The chapter will at least indicate something of the trends emphasized and insisted upon by the Apostle of Monism in the indoctrination of that cosmic *chelâ*-ship to which he gave enduring definition.

When a Great One takes on the vow of *Sannyâsin*, exactly what is the portent, what the meaning? In many of his lectures the Swâmi records between the written tenets words of an inner tempo apart from philosophy and edict where intuition supplants the reasoned law.

As there is an unseen thread upon which life strings the pearls of our experience so is there a doctrine not of words which guides the flashing heart to hidden chords. Here within this theatre of our Master's residence on earth his great work was accomplished and little known the hours of sufferance as he waited upon the instant of a *chelâ's* capitulation to some spoken word charged with new freedoms for the mind. The *Guru* must stay the march of his own profundities lest he hasten that acquiescence to which the student is not grown. He makes delays that he may gather in his flock, shepherd his Twelve to new releases and new ordainments.

And they were not ready, this Twelve, to carry on the shining saga of his American Apostleship when he at last was called to return to India. The student to whom the Swâmi made this known adds: "His heart was broken for he had not Twelve in the West to carry on the vow of a *Sannyâsin*". Thus the "fourteen stations of the Cross", the "rosary of beads", the good habits of the candidate must serve until technics are grasped in their largesse and their continuity. The Great One meditates in patience while humanity must grave itself upon reality. This vow of a *Sannyâsin* is a global thing—an experience into which the lost races of man find new hierarchies. How to make these majesties apparent and immediate is more than pen can do, yet of these glimpses that are given I record a few since they are of the shining nadir my Master rung down upon the quick of all endeavour.

Monism itself is the universal essence of the Law that is a *Sannyâsin* creed, and unto which the crescendo of all men's high convictions find their centre and their circumference. The Apostle was to us sign and symbol of that consecrated accord in which we found our revelation and our premise. Would that we had tarried less, given ourselves more to those split seconds where flash the timeless spaceless eternals and assurances. Earth shakes when the Great Ones yield up their vows to new commitments and the icon that holds men fast to Deity is boundary to their need. Vision leaves no hurt. Hath not the Apostle said: "To be united with the whole, to be free from the bondage of these imperfections and to be perfect—is blessedness?"

Haridâs once said: "Swâmi's personal desire is to test his own spiritual endurances against every margin, never to rest. But the *Sannyâsin* vow holds him to us. He must serve all who ask. Only then is there release when needs are filled." We should have worked harder, hungered more desperately for the Light, served the Law and found our terminals—tarried less upon the way. Paul Deussen tells us "the infinite is not beyond the finite", and he says the transcendental conception of God held in the Rig Veda becomes in the *Upanishads* an immanent one. Man does not err when he re-identifies his commitments to far profundities and revelation.

In June 1926 Sister Bhavâni left our home where she had been an honoured and beloved member of the family since December 1919, for India. She was accompanied by our oldest son Kâlidâs. They were met by the Swâmi, feted and introduced both in Calcutta and at the Belur Math. Later they took residence in the Ashram at Darjeeling. They studied under the Swâmi's direct supervision for over three years and then returned to the States owing to Sister's failing health. As Sister was unable to travel alone, "Young Sâhib", as the boys affectionately called Kâlidâs, sailed with her. He was together with a number of *Brahmachâris* at the time, preparing for a pilgrimage and tour on foot into the hills to visit the missions in the Himâlayas, for which the Swâmi had arranged. This Kâlidâs had to forego.

Upon their return to Antelope Valley and our Mesa home, they found many changes. We had named the place after Swâmi Abhedânanda and dedicated it to the universal spirit of Vedânta extending certain privileges and life tenure on the Acres to the Swâmis and savants so interested. There was a small printing outfit added which has never been developed to full capacity. Kâlidâs took this over and with the help of a younger brother, Lachan, did some work for the Swâmis here and ran a small weekly newspaper for about a year. Two of the Swâmi's poems to Srî Râmakrishna and Saradâ Devî, originally written in Sanskrit and translated by him into English, were for the first time printed here on the little hand press, and brought out in brochure form. Kâlidâs is now in the service of his government and all works suspended.

In February 1936 Sister Bhavâni passed-away at the Acres. She was nearly seventy-five years of age. She it was upon whom the Swâmi had depended to write the history of the Connecticut Ashram where she spent nearly thirteen years. While in India she began this work. Shortly after her return to the Acres, by a most lamentable mistake, she burned the wrong papers as she was assorting her records and data. What I have recorded in her stead of the Ashram is from memory of my long talks with her about her years in West Cornwall and from and of my own brief periods spent there.

Some months after she passed away the Swâmi wrote me these lines in a letter: "Sister has now entered the fifth stage of the heaven she deserves." This is a most cryptic sentence, aphoristic and of deepest purport. It confirms some of the Tibetan esotericism and it is assertion to the spiritual power that emanates from the purest wisdom. It is spoken of in Dr. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* who explains in that study of marvellous living paralells that it is possible for the conscious mind to make record of the soul's extension into other planes of existence through the intuitive perceptions alone. Not by any means is meant here those psychic powers which we understand as contact through the finer centres of the sense organs such as in apparitions, sound, smell and touch of or by some contact with spiritized electronics.

What is of intuition is knowledge through synthesis—that to which understanding is the sole guide and initiator. In the Tibetan teaching there is testimony that he who has not learned how to die, knows not how to live, while St.

Paul says: "I die daily". Here is brush with the eternals and light upon the way for those who study terminals to find their continuum and perspectives. They know how to live who first give up the glamour and the goals. Thus our Teacher taught: "To love the race and not the victory." So little Sister reappears in the Mesa Legends in "the fifth stage of the heaven she deserves". We know there is no death. We hear her chants in every desert wind that blows and her warm sweet rectitudes are flex to those pillars of silence that give shadow and substance to the sentiencies, spirit and cognisance to the Acres where dwells in name and very being Abhedânanda, last of the Great Ones.

Early in my on novitiate the Swâmi had told me "not to listen" to certain members of the household, students of dominant and positive mind. I had one besetting inhibition—that every one was right but me, therefore I listened, especially to those my seniors in years and those older and longer in the teaching. It was herein I made, to me, the most regrettable mistake of my life. I am a prolific writer and when I was told the reading of my letters "taxed the Swâmi" I wrote less and less often, feeling I had no right to weary him and should shoulder my own problems. And so I shut myself from such instruction. There were a few fretful worried years during which life was more than confounding. The few tenets I had earned I clung to in dogged desperation; it was not any real lack of faith. The letters I did write became few and far between, distances were great and I tried to keep when I did write, my small troubles to myself. Then strange grandeurs began to unfold within the soul and in looking back I can see my real need for the Teacher. But I folded my wings, furled all flags and turned within myself, as the maturing consciousness revealed the hidden doctrine of events and their deep import. These were the things he should have known—his due from a disciple and *how* he could have helped me, placed the stages of their meanings, knowing them as realizations from his seeding come to fruit.

One letter from him in answer to the only one I now recall in which I mentioned or gave him knowledge at all of the wealth of these spiritual and intuitive experiences that were coming. He came to me one Christmas night when I called out that without help I could bear no more. I knew not where to turn. And there he was beside me in a great ray of light that carried me from height to height on to some focal point where eternal reason and law took over every care. The peace and bliss were unutterable. In his answer to this letter he speaks three times of his great joy and happiness that I had had this tremendous experience and found such peace.

How little I returned him that he might know his child was finding release along the way, so reticent had I become. It seemed to me then that I was helping most by carrying on alone, and yet during all those difficult years he was the guiding star and *Guru*, deserving some response from one to whom he gave such care and love. The years have long passed and life with the Great Ones suspended here on earth lives on in retrospection and such knowledge of the Law as we have learned.

Few there are left of the earlier students and disciples to record and serve the living tenure of his mission here in America. Henceforth he must be known through his printed works which the Brothers at the Vedânta Math he founded in Calcutta are keeping in current publications. In Los Angeles environs I know of only seven now living students of the Swâmi. Many passed away before his own departure and of whom he once wrote to me: "They were all good souls".

* * * *

In February 1942 I had the opportunity to visit San Francisco. I went to the Temple where our Apostle had addressed audiences on so many occasions and found generally a spirit of true welcome and friendliness to the work and to all the Swâmis. The same *en rapport* that is of record in the *Vedânta Bulletin* and *Magazine,* and in the *Pacific Vedântin* in the early years of the new century.

Also I found a spirit of joy and freedom that was inspiring. I was privileged to meet the good Swâmi Ashokânanda who gave me encouragement in the undertaking of this Life of our Great Teacher. He has magnificent poise and a tender and intimate presence even upon the platform which win confidence in the student and listener. When I made enquiries among the older students about Swâmi Abhedânanda there was instant response, loving and reverent from all who knew him and even from those who had but heard him once. The Temple administration seems happy to maintain its legendary heroes and its founders. Among the living students who were either disciples or co-workers with the Apostle before he left for India I felt the warm glow of an appreciation of their years with him in America.

The Sister Emeritus (Sarolâ) at this time Dean at the Temple in Berkeley I found to be one of those rare spirits touched with the grandeur of a great mission. She radiated truth and generosity, wisdom and fine feeling. It is interesting to me—one who has been destined to work in the by-lanes and the fields, seldom in the centres—to find in meeting students, friends and disciples, instant recognition in those who have known the Great Ones. A certain candour and strength—fearlessness in meeting issues and a divine love for truth. They watch and select their words that not the shadow of a doubt may be left to stain the radiant vision of inner meanings and this is true of the most ordinary conversation. In daily living it makes of all things a consecration. Through the generosity of a living disciple of Swâmi Abhedânanda, now living in San Francisco and who faithfully attends the Temple functions possible for her, and the morning lectures on Sunday I was so fortunate as to visit the Temple in Berkeley and meet Sister Sarolâ (Mrs. French). She is a disciple of Swâmi Trigunâtîta, who was one of Srî Râmakrishna's Twelve. Later she was with our Apostle in India as his personal secretary. Mrs. Hansbrough (Sister Shânti) and a Miss Bessett (Sister Jayâ) took me to Berkeley where we spent the afternoon with Sarolâ. There was much of reminiscence I will long remember. Each of us four ladies had been associated with Swâmi Abhedânanda in some of the tenderest days of his period on earth. I alone had been with him at the Connecticut Ashram. Sarolâ alone had been with him in India. Shânti had been an intimate and faithful devotee (and what a worker) both in Los Angeles and San Francisco during his trips to the coast. Miss Bessett (Jayâ) a much younger lady, had heard him lecture when she was first investigating the teaching and her words were: "I was amazed to find myself in the grip of a Presence. No other word can so express my reaction." My daughter and I called upon a Mr. A. S. Walburg, mention of which has been made previously. He knew many of the Twelve and he it was who spoke of this Apostle as "The last of the Great Ones". He honoured and loved Swâmi Abhedânanda, told us in detail of the time he and Mrs. Walburg entertained him in San Jose. Everywhere we were met graciously as ambassadors with the silent yet potent query "are you one of us"? The Swâmi seemed present that afternoon introducing and reintroducing us in his name. Emeritus disciples of the Order of Srî Râmakrishna living out the earthly term; soon to be gathered within the cycle of their several dedications to unity and that causeless freedom of which thier lives have been so sincerely exponent. Abhedânanda's lecture seminars and classes made real impress upon the San Francisco audiences. He made friends wherever he went throughout the nation. Had it been so appointed he could have built sturdily and well on the Pacific Coast. With the passing of Swâmi Trigunâtîta the younger Swâmis, disciples of Vivekânanda, took up the work. Swâmi Ashokânanda the present administrator, is a phenomenal worker and an exceptional missioner. He is well liked by the general public. He maintains the work at both San Francisco and Berkeley and the Ashram in San Antone Valley. In the South-land a Centre named after Vivekânanda is in charge of Swâmi Prabhavânanda. This Centre had a steady and conservative growth over a period of years.

During the year that Swâmi Abhedânanda spent on the Pacific Coast before he sailed for India he was not idle. He soon had about him a group of students and friends and while cordially invited to lecture at the Temple he declined knowing that his prestige as a seasoned lecturer would disturb regular schedules and possibly be an obstacle in the work as established by the younger teachers at the Centre. Therefore he spoke from public platforms.

The tale is almost told, the sands run their hour. What carries on, when we who knew him, and had the honoured destiny to serve a little while within the *dharma* of his living, too are gone as fades the gong of some great bell, only the Heart of Being knows for "even the Will to serve must go". Will the new hierarchy that is to come bring in the living vision that is Monism? Will mankind become in its next period on earth exponent of those identifications which make him Partner and Includer of the principled existence our Apostle taught? The equity of unity—the reasoned Law that leads to emancipation where mind illumined leads on to sanctions and the Spirit?

EPIGRAMS AND QUOTATIONS ON FAITH

"Scientific faith is indispensable for the discovery of truth; without it science will not explain anything. It is that power of the mind by which we receive and hold the truth for the time being until some other higher truth or better explanation is found * *.

* * * *

"When reason supports and approves of that which is accepted by faith as true, such faith is not a blind faith; it is a rational faith * *.

* * * *

"As the absolute existence is unchangeable so the faith upon that absolute existence—that is true faith—will always remain unchangeable. God is unchangeable; therefore, true faith in God will always remain the same, it will never be changed * *.

* * * *

"True faith is the unerring companion of right knowledge."—Swâmi Abhedânanda's lecture on *Faith and Knowledge.*

CHAPTTER EIGHTEEN

The new book had arrived, Swâmi Abhedânanda's *Nine Lectures*. I had been reading in the early mid-morning while waiting upon those family freedoms and off-schedule independencies peculiar to a group of resident *Jñânins*. So, engrossed in that opening lecture, *The Way to the Blessed Life*, I was scarcely aware as Haridâs and Sister Bhavâni having finished their breakfast slipped into the room. "It's Swâmi's book" and I continued, but now reading aloud. As I read on through one high epitome I heard them speaking together and not too softly. At that moment I was virtually lifted up in my chair translated as in some high identification. As I returned to the sequences of thought and sense I cried out in my amazement and joy: "Listen, you!" and as I told they listened softly while I read aloud the chapter through.

The power of the Apostle lives on in his printed words. He wrote from axials, believe me, I know. He wrote, as he taught, from the living aphorism. Had we but known how he himself was the light he taught, the meaning and the *is*-ness of Vedânta: *he* was the hidden inner core and quick of things between time and the eternals while over the bridge of his shining *guru*-ship we who were blessed in knowing him found our peace and freedom.

* * * *

Dr. Herschel C. Parker, President of the New York Society and the gentleman with whom the Swâmi toured Mexico, Canada, Alaska and the Adirondaks, once told us when visiting at Abhedânanda Acres, that the grand humanness of the Swâmi should never be forgotten nor overlooked. and he said: "These Swâmis have all the virtues and none of the vices of other men." Dr. Parker had lived much in the out of doors with the Swâmi, camped and travelled, climbed mountain trails. The Apostle had all the vigour and splendid sense of adventure of any normal man and he was able to cope with all experience. His identity and his consecrations gave magnification to every last episode. His joy and his innocence were in the simplifications. His vow of *Sannyâsa* was holiness as are the attributes of God.

* * * *

Dr. and Mrs. B. K. Bagchi, close and dear friends of ours and frequent visitors to the Acres, sailed for India in 1937. They called on Swâmi Abhedânanda several times while in Calcutta at our especial request and they wrote us of him during those days before his final departure. Dr. Bagchi told me of the Swâmi's pleasure when he had letters from me, reading parts of them to him. Told also of him during those last days when he was so ill. Told us of the Kodak prints the Swâmi showed him of the grave of Christ which he had taken when in Kâshmere, perhaps for some research he hoped to do along the lines of Notovitch's work on *The Unknown Life of Christ*—we do not know.

Sister Bhavâni too had made mention of the Swâmi's deep interest in this subject upon her return from India. She had been present at a discussion between the Swâmi and a Christian minister who for ever was importuning the Swâmi to become a convert. And the Swâmi told him that Christ meant more to India than the system of salvation taught by the orthodox missionaries sent out to degrade India with their puerile tales of conversion. Vedânta taught truth and historicity, not miracles. Then heard him say: "I have visited the grave of Jesus Christ in India. Have you, who would convert me?"

Sister Bhavâni had been to home some two years from India. She was living a great deal in retrospect. Her frail health and increasing years were closing in upon that dauntless spiritual quest that had been her dominant characteristic through a long life. Things in the past, certain *Sâdhanâs* and experiences not entirely reconciled were coming to the surface of the mind for that last long survey age gives to the days that have been. She asked me many times about one particular incident. I had given as best I could the analysis I would have made for myself had the incident been my own. "But why, *why* did Swâmi do so?" When I could no longer quieten her questioning I advised her to ask another Swâmi who was at the time visiting us on the Acres. This she did and later came to me with this reply: "He tells me that some of the Great Ones in India teach in that way". Haridâs put it thus: "Chronic cases require heroic measures." The mind is full of sloth, it needs shocking to new address and accountings. Rochefoucauld has said the greatest of all sins is inertia. This the Teacher knows and must when the time is apropos waken the sleeping candidate to his own responsibility. Measures need quick and sometimes the startling surprise element that takes no stock of the amenities and social veneers. Students often rebel and harbour hurts to their pride, their ego unless the lesson is at the moment understood and properly placed in the category of Yoga disciplines. Little Sister—she was so devoted, so loyal throughout her sixteen years of direct service on the Path!

In Milarepa's *dhyânas* and discipleship under the Great Marpo there is parallel and precedent for all who would know the purpose and the technics of the applied psychology of the East. And those who will to shorten the term of their endurance sometimes need to know there is method and consistency within apparencies that lead to freedom of the *chitta* (mind).

* * * *

In 1943 I had been taken to my daughter's home from the hospital recovering from a very grave illness, to learn that our home on Abhedânanda Acres was burned to the ground. Apart from all other losses I was overwhelmed by the realization that the data and records of years were gone together with all my sources for the writing and compilation of this work, some considerable of which was finished. Early in the morning hours while the household was quiet I lay there trying to adjust myself to this loss and of why it had to be. My soul cried out: "Oh, why, *why* need it have been?" Swift as an arrow to its mark these words were formed within my consciousness: "Even the will to serve must go." I meditated upon this answer for some time, and then I cried: "But that does not satisfy me. There is more to it than this". *Then came in meanings with no suggestion of words this which I will try to convey. That those who are disciples of a great Teacher such as the Apostle that his spiritual children are bound to him by irrevocable laws; that our Swâmi had gone deep, plunged into grand profundity beyond our power to know and that each earnest disciple must feel the tug and pull at those umbilical cords of eternal life, and woe to any attachments they may have had to form, be it duties, objects, desires or investments here on earth. For when they yield up time and space we too must be ready.* This perhaps the making of his Twelve, who knows? Are you ready? Can you pass? Do you deserve to enter? To be burnt out within and without gives a sense of detachment both welcome and strange, but of that edge where two planes meet and "appear to be alike * * beware, and confuse them not".

> "The clear perception of the mind unmodified.
> And the noble impulse to serve others.
> Appear to be alike, but beware, and confuse them not".[1]

He hath entered where the Law of the immortal *Guru* dwells immanent and forever resident within the soul of all mankind for hath not it been said: "Seek and ye shall find? Believe and it shall be added unto you?" O Great teacher, to Thee our winged Way—to Thee in blessedness and peace we climb our days.

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[1] W. V. Evans-Wentz: *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa.*

* * * *

There were among the workers at the Ashram a few upon whom fell the heavier works of the farm, those works such as are ordinarily shirked by most. These few volunteered and assumed where others could or would not. Every little performed duty or task helped and was graciously accepted by the Swâmi for its worth. Upon the few fell the daily routines, cleaning of the stables and out houses, care of the animals, wood chopping and hauling, haying and general farm works with crops in field, and the household and kitchen work. One of the workers, harried by guests with querulous suggestions, requests and often demands, criticised for his workman's dress had, after some unusually onerous chore found himself about to have to pass the piazza where the guests and boarders usually assembled for an afternoon. He was low in mind and very weary. As he neared the house he remembered they would all be there. Shall I detour through the woods and avoid this unwelcome cynosure "or brave it out"? Too tired to make the decision: "I let my feet go as they would" he said in telling me of this and lo, when he found himself passing the house on toward the stable where he had other works to finish, he found the piazza vacant,—not a soul in sight. This episode he often cited to me as one of those experiences by which we build our determinations and rest in the larger Will—that is of the Lord.

* * * * *

The winter before I met the Swâmi I had been unsettled over certain inconsistencies, caught between the deep need for religious experience and the wrangle between cant and reason, caught too, in those fringes when the psychic crowds in upon the consciousness at every opportunity of indecision or distress. I had what I will call my first realization in extra-sensory perception or pure intuitive intent.

Early morning—I was awakened suddenly. I heard nothing, saw nothing, felt nothing, but I experienced a Presence, a great and overwhelming Presence so glorious and so blessed I leaped to my feet and gathering my robe went to Miss Trueman's room. "Anitâ, did you come in to my couch and sit beside me? Did you?" "What is it, Mary?" she asked: "Some one did. Oh, some one did,—it was wonderful." I was glorified. I could not find words. "Hush, Mary", she advised. "I can see it was wonderful. Cherish it. Guard it,—it is holy." I did not need the last three words to tell me that. I felt as our Lady Mary must have felt when the angel visited her and singled her out her great novitiate. This, reader, happened perhaps in January 1907. I found my Teacher in December 1908.

When I was at the Connecticut Ashram, one day I said to the Swâmi in speaking of my great love for Miss Mayson (Sister Bhavâni): "She is my spiritual mother, Swâmi, since she introduced me to you. It is to be expected". He looked me through and through. "No, my child, your spiritual mother is Anita."

Then I knew,—knew that there are more things in this living than we wot of.

* * * * *

The other experience in these early years was the night I was permitted to see the likeness of my husband's face. I had returned from our Swâmi's class with Miss Mayson and one of those breakings up of the rigidities of old inhibitions took possession of me, body, mind and soul. After the storm I fell into a light sleep, so slight I was awakened by this pattern of predestined events photographed upon my soul. I saw the likeness of a man carved as in the rock upon a mountain side. His face and features stern and pure and gentle limmed the wall of granite. A year later I met Haridâs at the Ashram. It was he. In 1910 we were married.

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In the *Diary* there is mentioned under date of October 19, 1903: "My father passed away at 9:00 A.M. He suffered from dysentery and fever." This letter must have reached him by forwarded mail while he was still abroad. But the son of Rasick Lâl Chandra returns three years later in 1906 to the land of his birth, visits the Oriental Seminary where his father taught for twenty-five years and where he himself studied. Here in the classic halls of an institution chartered in 1824, a welcome address was given to Swâmi Abhedânanda and to which he replied for one hour and fifteen minutes. Then the Diary records: "Met mother and returned to B's[1] house in the evening."

Sat. Nov. 11, 1916:
Again ten years later:

"Mrs. Le Page, and her mother and children came up in Yustler's machine at 8:00 P.M. Slept in Peace Cottage." But the Swâmi does not record the words of welcome which he spoke to my mother: "I am *very* glad to see you *here*, mother." And when he bade her good night again called her "mother." "Who is my mother"?Cries the Prophet of Israel. Who, indeed, but these great ones know and knowing teach.

During the summer of 1903 the Swâmi visited Italy, Switzerland and Germany with two students. He tells of the famous Swiss Alps. Of how at times roped and with a guide, he scaled those historic peaks and ranges, enjoying the grandeur of mountain scenery of which he never wearied. He was an indefatigable climber and loved the long range view from high altitudes. This and possibly the following year when he again visited the Continent, seem to be the only summers in which I find no definite mention of lectureships or classes; those itineraries with compelling schedules. He was truly free to absorb and contact the recorded experiences of history in these age-old monuments preserved in art gallery, cathedral, and museum—temples of storied learning which have for centuries contributed to civilizations inspiration and education.

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[1] Balarâm Bose.

Years later there is mention in his *Diary* of having shown to his close friends and intimates the large collection of photographs and postcards he had added to his library. He once showed me his volume of collected Madonnas all by famous artists—asked which one appealed to me most * * seemed interested in my choice. He never passed a point of reflection. "Why"? he asked. He must be certain and I must analyze ere he will let me go—the Madonna of my choice. Next day I showed him the copy of the "modern Madonna"—the peasant girl with shawl. "Hm-m" was all he said.

* * * * *

CHAPTER NINETEEN

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA OF INDIA

(*Contributed*)

These simple words were my first personal experience of that great one whose life, in its richness and simplicity, are set forth in the preceding pages, by one who was privileged to be numbered among his personal *chelâs.*

My interest in the Swâmi and what he taught had been aroused many years before by a savage and strangely truthless attack upon his work in West Cornwall. Its sectarian bias was so apparent that my interest was aroused and I read everything about him that I could find.

When, therefore, I received an invitation from that lady, who later became my wife, to be present at one of public lectures of the Swâmi, I hastened to attend. Looking about with interest to discover who the speaker might be, I saw a large brown man, of commanding presence, and statuesque composure, now being introduced as Swâmi Abhedânanda of India. In clear quiet tones, as musical as the soft ringing of bells, without gestures or tricks of oratory, he spoke the message to us, his face shining as though lighted with a celestial glow. The stillness was profound. Each was receiving a personal message, and when the speech ended with the familiar: 'Shânti, shânti, shânti!", we were as those who had stood in high places!

Once again I was to meet this holy man, at the home of Mme. Bergman, and there to see him "at ease". I was to discover that those kindly brown eyes could flash with indignation at scorn of the cause to which he was devoted, as well as beam with love at any and all who were interested in truth. His personal effacement was complete. "Not I, but Vedânta", he seemed to express. Even his clothing was so quiet as to be distinctive.

To me he still wears the ochre coat which was given him many years before and which he continued to wear until he could no longer button it around him. I must always think of the Blessed Râmakrishna's *shawl* which He gave away because it was too much trouble, resuming the old *shawl* which needed no care for it was old and faded. In his self-abnegation, he became renowned and beloved in the cause to which he was one of the great ones of the earth.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Los Angeles
July, 1945. } Harry Deane Stark

September 7th, 1944.

Dear Friends, Mr. and Mrs. Tho. E. Le Page,

I hope you will be able to read what I have tried to convey to you in my clumsy awkward way. As I do no claim of knowing English you have to overlook the many errors. If I have succeeded to convey a little of what prompted me to attempt this I will be rewarded. Try to use whatever you see fit. I ask neither for credit nor blame. Hoping to hear from you. If I would make an attempt to make corrections perhaps this would not reach you. I am gradually getting better. Hope this will reach you well.

Your ever true friends in Vedânta,

2360 Rohs Street
Cincinnati, Ohio. } Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Starick

September 1st. 1944.

When some time ago I was asked by the Râmakrishna Vedânta Math, Calcutta, to write about our connection and experience with Swâmi Abhedânanda as our *Guru,* I felt quite inadequate to do so, being limited in the mastery of English. As you requested it again, I shall endeavour to do the best in my humble way. I will ramble along as I would talk to you, you to be the judge what is fitting.

As you stated your path is chiefly Jñâna Yoga I think we will be able to understand each other. Although I have only had a limited education, from early childhood I was attracted by the unlimited, the eternal and the mysterious. Being physically handicapped, having broken my left hip in early childhood, I became very sensitive. Not understanding the law of Karma Yoga or the Law of Karma, I commenced to brood about the inconsistency of life, being as I saw it, I was cheated. I thought life not worth living. When about to take a drastic step I happened to come to live with a family in Fort Dodge, Iowa, that happened to be Spiritualists. Although I went to church, my brooding let me more and more to the denial of everything. At the meetings they had, I now see it was in God's plan. I got enough proof to convince me of the soul existing after death, which saved me from perhaps serious consequences. Still I was not altogether convinced. As life as I lived it then did not mean anything. I quitted working and went to Clinton, Iowa, Spiritualistic Camp meeting which I then considered a fitting place to have further proof in my quest for truth. In all my investigations, I always was guided by a rational intellect and thus equipped I went there. Among a few genuine mediums, there were many frauds. Instead of finding what I was looking for, the many fraudulent mediums branded me the fraud hunter. Again, the Lord being on my side, I had the satisfaction to expose some of the frauds. One morning after breakfast when pondering about the methods some used to hoodwink the people sitting around, the Chicago paper came and in it was the report of Swâmi Vivekânanda's lecture on Hinduism he had delivered at the Chicago World Fair, September, 1893. This was the soothing balm I then just needed. I took to it as a duck takes to water. No doubt I was acquainted with it in former incarnations. Right there was my parting with Spiritualism. But always will I be grateful that perhaps it had saved me.

This was in 1893. In 1895 I was in New York when I had the good fortune to hear Swâmi Vivekânanda. He was giving the seven lectures at Madison Square Concert Hall, all of which I heard, including *My Master,* to an audience of more than two thousands holding them spellbound for more than two hours. From then on I was bound to Vedânta for ever. I went back again to Iowa where at Davenport, Iowa, I met my future wife. After marrying, we moved to New York. We rented a flat on East 25th. There we got acquainted with people, the lady being an enthusiastic attendant of Swâmi Abhedânanda, then giving lectures at Carnegie Concert Hall. When I told her that I had heard Swâmi Vivekânanda in 1895, she knew I was ready to hear Swâmi Abhedânanda. My wife being raised Catholic, I had the task to induce her to something foreign to her. At first sight we became life-long friends and to my great joy my wife and I joined the Vedânta Society in 1901, after hearing Swâmi Abhedânanda giving a lecture on Râja Yoga, which opened up all that I was seeking, and for my wife it took the place of her religion. A happy salvation! Swâmi Vivekânanda started the Vedânta Society, 135 West 80th Street, New York, with Swâmi Sâradânanda its first *Guru*, Swâmi Abhedânanda then in London. We had just come to New York when we joined, our President being Professor Herschel C. Parker, Vice-president, Mr. Crosby. Also members were Professor Hiram Corson, Miss S. E. Waldo (Sister Yatimâtâ), Mrs. Ole Bull, and Miss Laura Glenn who afterward became Sister Devamâta, Miss Bennett, Miss Farrar, Miss Jessy Adams and scores of others whose names I have forgotten. From the very first relations between Swâmi Abhedânanda and us as disciples were very intimate. We got the impression of him as a teacher by Divine right. We found ourselves among a happy family presided over by a loving father. Unconsciously we felt that Swâmi Abhedânanda thought not by the letter alone, he was a living example of the truth.

Belonging to the Society, every one had his alloted place. We had charge of the receiving of callers during Wednesday afternoon when the Swâmi was to receive them. I think it was the first week I had charge. The ground-floor of the Society house was a large floor, divided by a folding door. The Swâmi being in the one room and closing the folding doors when somebody came. Presently one of the high society ladies came, that time being dressed in silk that swished when she walked across the floor, driven by a liveried coachman, also footmen. She asked me: "Is Swâmi in?" After introducing her, the Swâmi closed the folding doors. I could hear their conversation. After hearing what she had to say the Swâmi said to her: "It would be folly to waste my time giving you instructions, when so many need my services. I advise you to live a little longer in your accustomed way. Then when you are ready, come again. My instructions are not to be bought by money." Imagine the shock this was for her. She abruptly turned around and went out. For me it was a great lesson, that you must be prepared to be taught by a teacher like Swâmi Abhedânanda. As I had read extensively, intellectually

I could grasp and follow the Swâmi and the spiritual side the Swâmi had the gift to impart.

Here Râja Yoga played a great part. It solved so many of the mysteries for me. I, following Spiritualism and sitting in circles had become quite mediumistic or negative. Through Râja Yoga I woke up to the realization of that fact. If ever I have struggled to get to normal again, I did here, and I succeeded. As Swâmi Vivekânanda says in his *Raja Yoga,* little glimpses give you proof that the whole science is true and I had many glimpses. We were diligent students both in Râja Yoga and the *Bhagavad Gita.* In or at one of the classes as it were, something occurred, call it miracle if you wish. All at once I was enveloped by a bright light that did not leave me for more than a month. Oh, what peace and bliss! About the same time I had a dream. Relating it during the class, the Swâmi thought it remarkable. Being the spiritual interpretation of the parable of Christ and His disciples and the lake of Gallilee, Christ sleeping within. The disciples getting frightened went to the Master, awoke him, and he calmed the storm. It was Peter, the intellect, that awoke him, and Christ said: "Oh, ye of little faith." Many signs of the truth of Râja Yoga came to us, but it was in Divine Mother's plan that I should return to a life to raise a family, as we had no children for the first seven years. After recovery from a severe sickness, being left in a weakened condition, I was advised to go South and in 1904 I landed in Atlanta. There I recovered, and five children were born in the same house and room, three boys and two girls. I realize today that was needed to complete our training in our spiritual journey. What benefit we had derived having Swâmi Abhedânanda as our *Guru.* I tried to live and teach by example.

Now I will relate some of, I think, very vital teachings. Once at the Râja Yoga class, a young lady, a portrait painter,[1] said to the Swâmi: "Swâmi, I am thoroughly disgusted with myself," and the Swâmi answered: "That is the best that could have happened to you". That same lady was at the Ashram when I visited there. No doubt you know her. I have forgotten her name. Again at one of the lectures a lady said to the Swâmi: "I only wished you could bring us a more comfortable message" and the Swâmi answered: "I would to God I could". Again a lady asked: "Would you mind, Swâmi, to tell us your age"? His answer was: "Before Abraham was, was I". During the lectures the Swâmi gave on *Spiritualism and Vedânta,* the Swâmi stirred up quite a commotion, stating that the messages that come through the mediums are more liable, as after their passing over they still are the same as they left here, with all the faults they had. But most of the stirs he made was by his message *Christian Science and Vedânta.* It seems to me the lectures on this have disappeared not being printed or withdrawn.[2] As the Swâmi stated then, most of Christian Science has been copied from Vedânta and the *Bhagavad Gitâ.* The Swâmi had that day a copy of *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy, published 1878, in which whole paragraphs were taken from the *Bhagavad Gitâ.* This was before the advent of Swâmi Vivekânanda and has since disappeared. Before knowing Râja Yoga, we had little knowledge of either discrimination, concentration or meditation. Once I asked The Swâmi: "When do I know that I am concentrated"? and he answered: "When time vanishes." How often this answer has helped me. It has been during the first few Yoga lessons he told us: "If you wish to learn self-control, never sit in a rocking chair and rock." A lesson I never have forgotten. How he impressed us with the lesson work for work's sake. "To work thou hast the right, but not to the fruits thereof." Reading it or hearing it from an inferior teacher never would do it. Studying the *Bhagavad Gitâ* with him was a revelation. He was able to impart the hidden secret. Always there has been a relation between us that even if we did not talk, Swâmi's presence was inspiration. Mrs. Starick felt most reverential toward the Swâmi.

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[1] Maragaret Sinnett (Sister Saraju).

[2] This lecture is in the collection under title *Nine Lectures* by Swâmi Abhedânanda.

At the afternoon meditation class, Miss Laura Glenn, who later became Sister Devamâtâ, was our teacher. As I have always said, she was as a hen taking care of her brood. She also had the gift to impart spirituality. From the time we left New York and went to Atlanta, she kept the correspondence between us and the Society. The Swâmi did little writing. One day the Swâmi introduced to us Swâmi Nirmalânanda. He had then just arrived in America. He told us how fortunate we were to have Swâmi Nirmalânanda as our teacher for meditation as he was coming direct from Belur Math. I have met quite a few Swâmis that are in America, but never had I the experience as I had with Swâmi Nirmalânanda. In his presence I became speechless. We left New York and I don't know if longer association with him would have altered it.

One of the first impressions of Vedânta was that I became so enthusiastic wanting to tell everybody about it. I met Mr. John Wittine (Brother Râmadâsa) in Springfield, Massachusetts. You have had proof that I made him a Vedântist. Today I have changed my tactics and consider the message we have received too valuable to waste on the undeserving. The Divine Mother alone be the judge and if we leave it to Her hands we will be acting the right way.

In Atlanta through business associations and Masonic Lodge and belonging to the Universalist Church I met quite a few people I could bring my message of the new life. But the main source was the Psychological Society where I met many ready for Vedanta. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Thaden and Mrs. Rose Ashby, that were very helpful in making Swâmi's visit to Atlanta such a success. After receiving Swâmi's telegram from San Fernandino, Mrs. Ashby got in touch with the newspapers with whom she was well-acquainted and we were able to arrange very successful lectures at Cable Hall and Atlanta Auditorium. Also at the Unitarian Church where the Swâmi gave lectures for over a week to a very large audience and also very enthusiastic. One of these very much appreciated was at the Sunday morning service. It was *'The Kingdom of Heaven is within You'*. The newspapers were quite favourable in reporting the Swâmi's message. A few harping critics were heard but in all it was a big success. When I first received telegram there arose doubt in my mind of how the Swâmi would be received on account of the colour line. Being connected as we were, although not easy, it succeeded. I had to guarantee to stand good for him. Everything coming off as it did, it proved to be the happiest moments of my life. Before the Swâmi sent telegram he did not know that Mrs. Starick was so sick. She had contracted a cold and it had settled on her lungs and we and the doctors thought it might be T.B. The doctors, although we had four children to take care of, had ordered Mrs. Starick to stay in bed and live on eggs and milk only and take a rest cure. As we had Mrs. Starick's mother living with us and plenty of coloured help she could do it. If that would not help she had to go to Arizona. As I said before the Swâmi did not know anything about it. When the Swâmi arrived in Atlanta I brought him to the house. He had not seen Mrs. Starick since 1904 and this was 1913. The first impression on the Swâmi was a real shock I could readily see. He stood near me, took hold of my hand and squeezed it and told me: "I am with you and will help you". No doubt the Swâmi was the possessor of Yogîc powers. As far as I can remember this was some time during the previous day. During my excitement having the Swâmi with us and thinking of all the arrangements, I did not realize the import of what the Swâmi said. One of the uppermost thoughts in my mind was that Mrs. Starick, as she was, had to miss Swâmi's lectures and most of his presence in Atlanta. As I was able to get the Swâmi into the Piedmont Hotel, that time considered the finest in Atlanta, I felt the Swâmi was taken care of. Now I let Mrs. Starick relate her story. After the Swâmi had left the house and since then on and all through the night it seemed to her a heavy stone or load was lifted from her. The very first thing next morning she told me to arrange for a dinner for the Swâmi and Mrs. Ashby; Mrs. Starick to prepare it herself. She got up out of bed, had everything sent for and we sat down to an excellent meal. From that time on Mrs. Starick did not go to bed and went to all of the Swâmi's lectures. Swâmi's coming to Atlanta that time, call it miracle or Divine Mother's blessing; for us it has been both. No doubt you could relate similar instances. It is now 1944. Mrs. Starick has had her 66th birthday and is still well and able to take care of me, not having been too well the last few months, but am improving. As I wrote you before, we raised five children, three boys, the oldest will be 38 on October 28. He is in the Army at Headquarters of General Patton, Third Army, somewhere in Europe, was for some time in England, went through the campaign in France, now perhaps in Germany. The youngest 34 is in Second Army, Combat Engineers somewhere in Massachusetts in Camp. The second son 36, is in Dayton, Ohio, City Planning Director. Both of the girls are married to real devout Lutheran men of whom we are proud. Both so far were saved from being drafted. The oldest girl, Ella, has a boy about 2 years, 3 months old. The youngest, a girl, 1 year and 6 months old. As you wrote you also have five children we would like to hear more about them. We hope and pray for the boys to return safely home and the cruel war to be over.

As what happened when the Swâmi was in Atlanta I wish to relate to you. The first few years of our Râja Yoga practice moving into a new house, the first I saw to, was to have a suitable room for Yoga practice. We had rented a house and I had selected the front room and had kept it separate for that purpose. When afterward we moved from there, people moved in, the lady of which was a medium. Coming into that room, she noticed an exceptional atmosphere and told it to the neighbours and enquired who it was that lived there before and was told their name was Starick. The same lady came to Swâmi's lectures. From the very first it always has been my job to take care of the literature. At the conclusion of this lecture, the Swâmi announcing books on sale, said Mr. Starick has charge of them. At that, that lady got up and told the Swâmi that she wished to meet the folks that had left such beautiful atmosphere in the house she had moved into and here at Swâmi's meeting I had the good fortune to meet them. As Sister Devamâta always has said, who can tell, when and where we do good, but only by living the life. Amidst all the handicaps that we had we have tried.

Now as to our connection with Swâmi Paramânanda. I was cutting for a firm in Atlanta making Army Officers' uniforms. Being German, one of the members of the firm took a dislike to me, although I filled my place satisfactorily. But I considered it best to leave Atlanta and move to Cincinnati. Having been in Cincinnati before I left wife and family in Atlanta till I found a job and a house to go into. One of the places to spend my spare time was the library. There I found the

Message of the East, the first time I saw it, Swâmi Paramânanda's publication. Nor did I know or hear anything about Swâmi Paramânanda. As at the New York Vedânta Society we did know Miss Laura Glenn, I did not know she had become Sister Devamâtâ. In this particular *Message of the East* there was an article on the *Lessons the War Has Taught Us* by Sister Devamâtâ. Knowing Sister as I did the whole article was a reflection of her. So I took the liberty to write to Laura Glenn as I knew her, telling how I enjoyed that article and in it was so much of her personality that I could not but think that Sister Devamâtâ and herself were one, to write me if true. In reply, she wrote: "Yes, it is I. I want to give you another surprise. Swâmi Paramânanda will be in Cincinnati giving lectures at Christ Parish Church. Go and hear him. (This was 1919). I have told him all about you. You introduce yourself." We went but did not introduce ourselves. The Swâmi did so. From then on by Divine Mother's grace this was destined to be. At my visit to West Cornwall Ashram that day I met there a young Hindu walking along with a bird tied by a string sitting on the palm of his hand. Meeting me he said to me: "A messenger from heaven." Spontaneously I answered: "A messenger from heaven should not be kept by tying him with a string". He said: "That is so". He untied the string and the bird flew away. This time I did not know that this was our first meeting. But not being sure I later told him about meeting this way, Swâmi Paramânanda only smiled.

Writing all this is only to prove to us that all our life is guided and directed by Divine Mother. We had the good fortune to see Sister Devamâtâ and talked to her on our last trip to Ananda Ashrama which will always be one of my happy recollections.—Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Starick.

NOTES FROM MY DIARY:

During this Atlanta Seminar I find record in *My Diary* of date and lecture and these comments:

Mar. 1, 1913: Met at station Atlanta, Ga., by Mr. Starick, Mrs. Ashby, Mr. Blair, Mr. and Mrs. Theden.

Fri., Mar. 7, 1913: Lectured on *Godconsciousness* in the afternoon. I was inspired.

At the Unitarian Church, the Swâmi lectured on *Spiritual Unfoldment*. Lectured at the Library Hall but does not mention subject. On *Science and Breath* in the afternoon of March 6, and on March 9 in the Church in the afternoon on *The Obstacles to Godconsciousness*. "Met Rabbi Mark and Dr. Ellenwood at my lecture". Then on March 9 "Lectured at the Unitarian Church at II-30 on *Kingdom of Heaven Within*. In the afternoon on *Reincarnation* at the Cable Hall. * * In the evening at the Auditorium on *India's Contribution to Ethics*. It poured all afternoon and evening. Had a bad cold."

Next day, his last in Atlanta, he mentions a lesson followed by a conference with doctors in the afternoon, and in the evening attends the Tabernacle to hear Mr. Campbell-Morgan. This week was crowded with a full programme of lectures, press interviews, conference and lessons—an opportune and successful tour reflecting the devotion of Mr. and Mrs. Starick who made the contacts and arrangements.

JAI RAMAKRISHNA KI JAI!

2455 Bowditch Street,
Berkeley, 4, California
June 2, 1944.

Mrs. Thos. E. Le Page,
Pearblossom, California.

My dear Shivâni:—Your letter of May 20th has been read and re-read a number of times; then when Swâmi

(Ashokânanda) was leaving after his Sunday lecture, I handed it to him, instead of giving him your message of regard. "What is it?" he asked. "A letter from Mrs. Le Page. Please take it, read it at your leisure—if you have any such thing anymore."

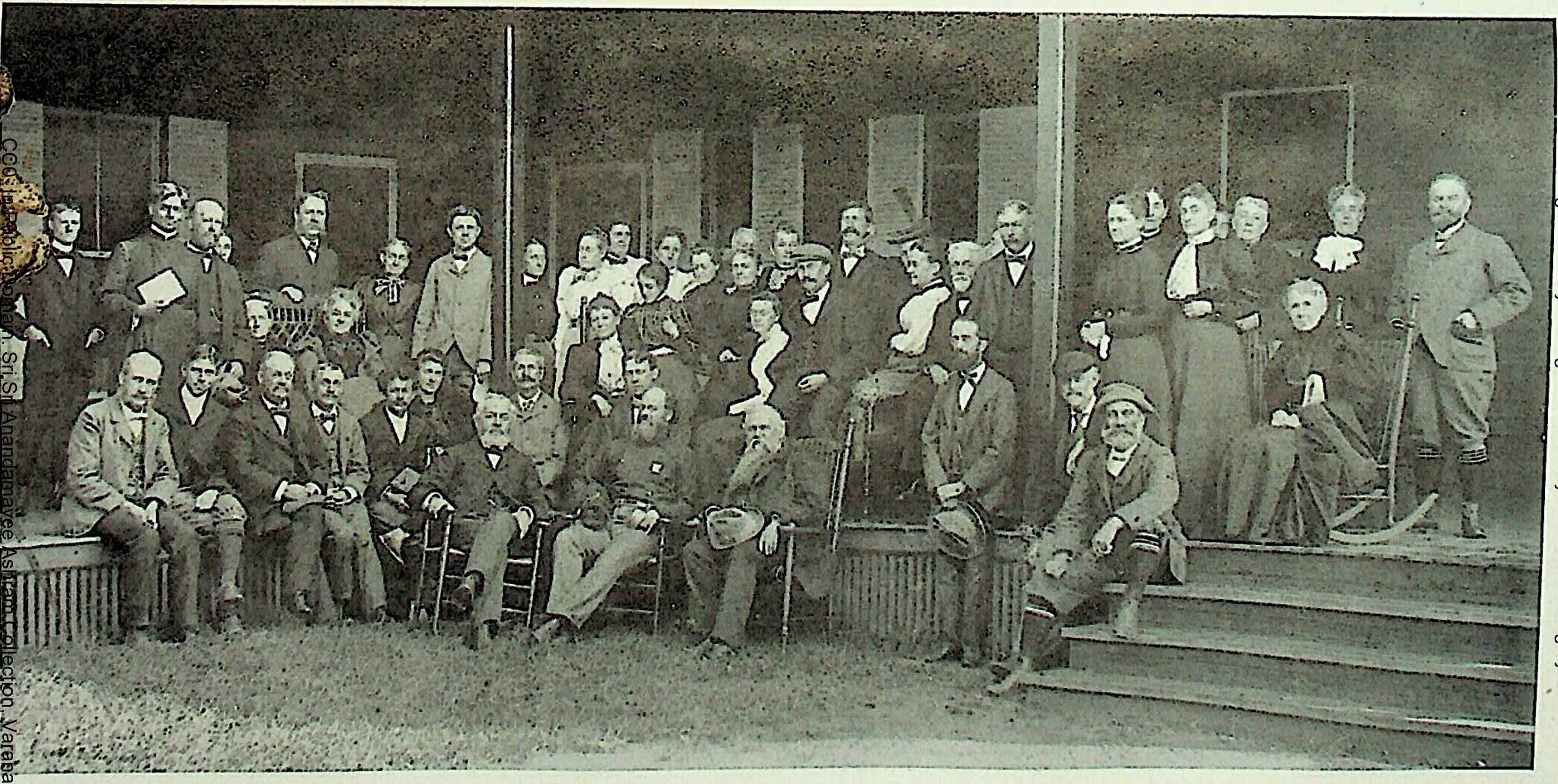
Last evening he returned it to me, and I wish I could convey the sorrow and anguish in his voice as he asked me to express his sympathy when I wrote. I knew he felt the same shock I did—for when one of the Masters family of devotees is hurt, we all suffer—so strong is that bond.

"It is terrible!" he added. "Yes," I replied, "blow after blow! But what I am thankful for is that they have the courage, the fidelity, even at their years, to begin at once to repair losses and rebuild anew; no waste of energy in lamenting and repining."

Yes, in my life also "history seems made of the unexpected." I might say it has been divided into segments or chapters so different as to make me wonder what has been achieved, what is the purpose of its conflicting experiences.

Back to me come the words of my *Guru*, Swâmi Trigunâtîta: "Study your life: your life is your Bible. Study your own life!" On the face of it, that would appear as crass egoism or self-centredness. But in the light of the Vedânta one learns that Truth can be attained only through experience—Scriptures, teachers, environment are the signposts. Each one must walk his own solitary path to the Goal.

It might be helpful to add, for your own bit of hard road just now, some reflections and council given me latter by Swâmi Abhedânanda. It so occurred that he was in Los Angeles at the time the tragedy came to remove our revered teacher and permit his return to his beloved Master Srî Ramâkrishna.



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Having learned that I was also at death's doorway, the Swâmi came to see me and I shall never forget his kindness when he saw my helpless shattered body, life almost extinct outwardly—but very aware within. Years later, in a conversation when he gave me the rare privilege of serving as his private secretary, the opportunity came to discuss these events—strange and unaccountable as the whole chain and sequence seemed to me.

I told him I could not understand what possible *Karma* I could have had with the man Vavra: I did not know him, did not remember ever to have seen him.

"Your *Karma* was not with him. It was with Swâmi Trigunâtîta * * sometimes a disciple agrees to accept a share in the *Karma* of a teacher," he stated.

But I am not aware of ever agreeing to anything like that—nor was it asked of me, I told him.

"It was not necessary for your conscious mind to know!" was his startling reply. Then continuing, he said: "In some cases, the *Karma* of an individual soul is accelerated—intensified both in degree and time. One might pass through in a brief period what naturally would be scattered over a hundred or more incarnations. I myself have lived ten incranations in this present life!" Again, from India December 23, 1937, he writes to encourage me: "I thank you for your kind and loving letter dated September 4, 1937. It has brought to my memory vividly all the past events of your life as well as your contact with my humble self * *. It seems to me that Srî Râmakrishna is guiding your life and purging out your bad *Karma* to make your heart pure so that you may get true spiritual realization towards the end."

You can understand why I love and revere him. And why I want to pass on to you this blessed assurance from his lips. It is not meant for me alone, but for all who struggle to gain the heights. Nor did Christ offer an easy goal to His disciples; and a Vivekânanda sounded the battle-cry of "Strength! Strength! the Vedânta is not meant for weaklings." So say they all, though the heart may be filled with compassion for us.

Forgive this long dialogue, and just know what is in my heart for you and yours. Swâmi Abhedânanda once said, indirectly referring to his name in reference to his address on *Unity and Harmony*, given at the Hindu Temple; "You know I am strong for Oneness!" So you and I are at one in him.

Ever sincerely yours—in Râmâkrishna-Vivekânanda,

Sd.|- SAROLA.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS FROM ANNIE V. HAGELIN TO THE AUTHOR.

Plantsville, Connecticut.
June 1944.

"I like to read and think about the Vedânta Ideal of Freedom in this life. You know how the Swâmi always lectured and talked—always wound up by insisting that freedom from rebirth could or should be real to us in this life and I like to concentrate on that rather than on any work done on the outer or material, for after all life is so very short * *.

"I think the younger Swâmis of today have done all they can but are unable to bring out the Real in us the way the direct disciples of Ramâkrishna were able to. * * Some one told me very few are alive now who knew Swâmi Vivekânanda and Swâmi Abhedânanda. * * It always brings up those very wonderful days in New York City at the "Turn of the century". There are so few left knowing what that means to us."

* * * * * * *

Plantsville, Connecticut.
Nov. 30, 1944.

"How fortunate we were to be in New York City when Swâmis Vivekânanda and Abhedânanda were there. Now there is nothing to compare to the training they gave us then."

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Plantsville, Connecticut.
Feb. 21, 1945.

"Dear Mrs. Le Page,

I have read your letter of Dec. 10th quite often and it makes me feel nearer Swâmi Abhedânanda. (I always like to write his name.) And I feel so sorry I can't drop in for a talk about Vedânta and old times in New York City. Those were very wonderful days * * and I like to live them over again in mind.

* * As I had never been in the farm (Swâmi's Ashram in the Berkshire Hills) at West Cornwall except once when I went there and stayed a whole day and that was the last time I saw Swâmi Abhedânanda, I know hardly anything about him from that time on. I don't even remember what year that was. (In Swâmi's Diary there is an entry under date, "Sat. May 24, 1912: Miss Hagelin came in afternoon. May 28, 1912: Miss Hagelin left. Whittine took to station".) He (Swâmi) seemed always to be looking at the *real* behind the passing show. We were indeed blessed to be trained by him. Romain Rollând, Sister Niveditâ and all who have mentioned him in their writings gave the thought of a Great Soul. Aloneness, as you call it, is I think the Great Truth seen through a thin veil of *mâyâ.* It was one of Buddha's noble truths which he sought to have the world understand. Swâmi Vivekânanda spoke and wrote of it very often. 'When Freedom is attained

that is *Kaivalya*, Isolation and Perfection.' He was a soldier in spirit and forged ahead and had small patience with delay. You can understand that as a thread running through all his writings. And he repeated it often and said it in many ways. Swâmi Abhedânanda spoke more of *Oneness* as his name indicates and he never missed a chance to bring out that point. Every student and teacher seem to have a favuorite way to the Ultimate and we are drawn to those who tend to open the road that seems plain to us."

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726, Main Street,
Plantsville, Conn.
May, 2, 1945.

"Dear Shivâni,

"Your dear nice long letter came a few days ago and the wonder is how you had time to write it with all your other writing to be done but I appreciate every word and read it over again often. And it seems to me that every time I read it brings to mind things of long ago. Sat. May 24, 1912, nearly 33 years ago since my one and only visit up to the Ashram in West Cornwall, Conn. I stayed over Sunday and left Monday, A.M. Miss Mayson was there and I had forgotten Whittine. They took me to the train, the Swâmi and Whittine on the front seat and I in the rear seat of the farm waggon. And that was the last time I saw the Swâmi and in all the years I never heard from him, and then when I was sure I was to have some word from him it was not delivered for some word I am very sure there was. In 1912 and since 1908 I had been working in Washington and in all that time I only saw him a few times and the reason I never wrote to him was that I was so busy with work that would not have been interesting to him in any way. However, I have been sorry that I did not write to him now and then. However, he knew that he had done his work as a teacher well and that there was not more to say.

"I first heard the Swâmi lecturing on a Sunday afternoon in Dec. 1898 and from then on I attended every one of them. Joined the Society and became a charter member in the fall of 1899. From then on he did his best work in New York City and the house was free for lectures and classes. Of course, I took the Yoga lessons and they were easy for me to do and get the meaning out in a short time. Once I asked him why it was so easy for me to do what others found hard to do at all. Just that once he seemed to get down to my level, smiled indulgently and said: 'You did good work in the past.' And strangely just about that time my own past lives came back to me. The mass of them I passed over as not interesting, only the last one was. That was the one just before now and lasted about 70 years. I was in India and lived in the Ashram in the forest devoting my whole life to the search after the Truth—passed away with empty hands having failed to reach 'Life's Utmost Goal' and then I saw what he meant by 'good work in the past'. I believe he could read our past lives and that he gave us our lesson in such a way as to make it easy for us to take up where we had left off.

Up to 1899 Swâmi Vivekânanda had been lecturing and holding classes and we must always be grateful to one of his students for *Râja Yoga*. Miss Waldo got all that from him and had it into print for us. Swâmi Vivekânanda was a very great help to me too. He always made it seem so easy to renounce all other things and to concentrate on "coming out and standing alone." But it was Swâmi Abhedânanda who had patience and who knew how to lead us on. And you know the secret sign—you have seen it or read about it—the four pointed star—it was bright and very beautiful with pearl-like points. I told him about it and he said 'yes'. It was not like the wheel of life which spins very fast and catches wandering souls on its spokes

—that is the one Lord Buddha mentioned in those wonderful verses spoken by him after he had reached his goal. I imagine that is the real origin of the Tibetan prayer wheel, an emblem for use in concentration. And thank you so much for telling me to call you by your spiritual name. I have no idea of its meaning.

"* * As I look back over my nearly 67 years I would say it has not been an easy life in the outer—just full of difficult jobs and constant change but with the steady light of Vedânta shining over it all. We have so much to be thankful for, for we are really grand-children of Srî Ramâkrishna who was an Incarnation of the Lord Himself, and his children came over here and we had this good fortune to meet them on life's wayside. The younger boys who came over are farther from that great centre.

"And so your book is nearly done. It seemed too much for you to do and after that dreadful fire. May be it is better since you got new material than it would have been at the first writing. I hope all of us who consider ourselves his own children will live to read it and read it more than once. I can get more and more out of a book or letter just by reading it many times. And if I can I will write to India to the brothers but it is not easy for me to write. That is why I think it is so wonderful that you can write not only letters but a book. Miss Nablo who knew all of us well told me that we are alike in our devotion to Vedânta and to Swâmi Abhedânanda. I could not by any chance ever change that. Thank you again for wanting me to come for a visit. * * It is not good for me to be tied down to one and the same place but of course at my age I do feel less able to travel in body as I would like to do in mind. I would like to go to the Centre you speak of at San Francisco where may be I would feel welcome and at home.

"* * I think your title for the book is perfect and he would have liked it well. And how can you know that he has not been with you and helped you in a work that seems so beyond what anyone could do without real help and that kind of guidance as his would be. I firmly believe that those who helped us when they were here go right on and help us via the mind after they appear to have left us. Regarding freedom—I think each life here is conditioned by past *Karma* and that we are not at the same mile-stone on the road to freedom. The householder's great place here in the world is to provide the foundation upon which everything else rests. Freedom comes to those who give up every grain of sand and for all it is life's utmost goal.

"Blessings on you—Pârvati.

Sincerely,
Annie V. Hagelin" (Sister Pârvati)

PART FIVE

ADDENDA

ADDENDA

A contention and Western Thesis on Vedânta.

An Interpretation of the Vedânta by Horatio W. Dresser.

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY:

(1) *Teachings cf the Vedas* by Edward C. Farnsworth.

(2) The Correct Interpretation: 'A Reply' by Abhedânanda.

A masterly exposition of *Mâyâ* which seems not to appear in any of Swâmi Abhedânanda's heretofore published works.

New York Letter.

Memorial Service.

Swâmi Abhedânanda on the Pacific Coast.

Swâmi Abhedânanda's *Spiritual Unfoldment*—an early Book Review.

Three press write-ups—on Swâmi's appearance in San Francisco, and in Atlanta, Georgia. (Note: I have tried in vain to locate these papers for verification. The *Constitution* files were burnt and the other clippings are without name or date. I give them to show the cordial reception given the Swâmi's message and to show how copiously he was quoted by the Press following the early lecture years).

Two Letters from William Morrow and Company.

One Letter from The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.

A few of the disciples' and students' Sanskrit names, given at initiation. I give these few mostly to show the type and character of names the Swâmi gave; each carries its own special spiritual meaning, indicating the candidate's inner path. Americans seem shy about using them publicly. There were many others.

Virankalâ — Emily Palmer Cape
Dayâ — Alice Waldo
Shânti — Miss Everett
Saraju — Margaret Sinnett
Sarolâ — Mrs. Cory
Gauri — Mrs. Gould
Bhavâni — Elizabeth Anne Mayson
Râmadâsa — Mr. Whittine
Haridâsa — Thomas E. Le Page
Kâlidâsa — Kalidas Le Page
Shivâni — Mary Hebard (Le Page)
Pârvati — Annie V. Hagelin

The following did not have formal initiation:

Sitâ
Râdhâ
Lakshman
Râma

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE VEDANTA

> 'Verily all this universe is *Brahman*; from Him does it proceed; into Him it is dissolved; in Him it breathes.'—*Chândogya Upanishad*, III, 14.

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Among the many important results which sprang from the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, none is more significant than the propaganda of the Vedânta philosophy. Swâmi Vivekânanda, one of the most striking figures in that Parliament, soon became a popular lecturer and was followed by other exponents of the great Oriental system. Regular societies for the study of the Vedânta have been founded, books and papers devoted to the subject have been issued; and the Swâmis have been given a very prominent place on the programme of summer schools founded in the interests of universal thought. Aside from the mere fad—hundreds have followed if not worshiped, the Swâmis, because of their novelty—it is evident that the philosophy has taken a firm hold of the minds of highly developed people. Some have seemed to care more to hear a great truth stated awkwardly by a Hindu than to hear the same truth expressed beautifully and logically by an American. But all this admitted, here is a meaning in the propagandism, and while the people of our country are far from accepting, or even listening to the Vedânta with the enthusiasm with which we are credited by the magazines of India, yet the Vedânta has had its place, and its presence is not to be ignored. Perhaps, then, we have had the Swâmis with us long enough to form some estimate of their teaching, and to judge the fundamental principle of the Vedânta in accordance with the criteria of Western thought. To make such an estimate, undertaken in the spirit of broad fellowship and the love of universal Truth, is the purpose of this article.

The term *Vedânta* signifies "end of the Vedas"[1] which are the sacred books of the *Brâhmans*. The fundamental principle of this philosophy founded on these sacred revelations, is that there is but one existence—the *Atman*, Self, *Brahman*. One cannot see this Being, for it is that by which all seeing comes; one cannot formulate it, since it is beyond all definition. It is *ekamevâdvitiyam*—'one without a second.' "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite." It is described in the *Brihadâranyaka Upanishad* as "unseen, but seeing; unheard but hearing; unperceived, but perceiving; unknown, but knowing. There is nothing that does but it, nothing that perceives but it, nothing that knows but it". This one is both subject and object; the beholder and the seen are one. It is all that ever existed or ever will exist, self-sufficient, all-embracing, unattached, unfettered, attributeless, actionless, feelingless, and perfect.[2] If you try to define it as this or that, to describe this ultimate entity, the invariable reply is, '*neti, neti*'—'not this, not this'.

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[1] Its true meaning is 'the end of wisdom', *i.e.*, the divine knowledge once attained, there is left nothing else to be attained.

Some of the noblest passages to be found in any literature, voice this sublime transcendence of the One, the eternal Spirit, the great All. The reader forgets all else in momentary oneness of spirit with the universe, in worshipful contemplation of the Ineffable, the Perfect Whole. Yet sooner or later, the mind turns again to the finite to ask, what of that? Granting that Reality is one, indivisible and indefinable, what is this world that we see, and what are we who perceive it? The answer of the Vedânta is, It is *mâyâ,* it is unreal, the play of the spirit, the "show" of the infinite. There is in reality only one soul, sunk into seeming difference, only appearing to be divided into the souls of men and animals. In truth there are no finite individuals, for "in reality they cannot exist * * how could it be that I am one, and you are one? * * we are all one, and the cause of evil is the perception of duality".[3]

The physical universe and the human soul cannot be explained as creations of the One, because we would then be predicating of him the attribute of creation. "You cannot ascribe any motive to the Absolute" says Swâmi Sâradânanda,[4] "without making him imperfect." Accordingly, the world arose, not through purpose or plan, but is due to *mâyâ* (illusion); and this in turn is due to our

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[2] Vide by N. Vaithianather—'*The Advaita Philosophy*':

[3] Swâmi Vivekânanda: *Address before the Graduate Philosophical Society,* p. 14.

[4] *The Journal of Practical Metaphysics,* February 1897.

avidyâ (ignorance). We are bound by ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, desire, and the limitations of space and time, which we misapprehend as realities. We think we are beholding reality, or we deem the visible world a manifestation of reality. But the real *existence* is without manifestation. The real being in each of us is this one Self, "our individuality is God". You are this *One*, I am it, all is *God*. We seem separate, you and I, but the separation is due only to name and form; this separation will continue only while name and form endure. When these illusions vanish, we shall return to the true Self, from whose infinity of bliss and wisdom we wandered through ignorance. Hence the goal of all existence is to throw off illusion, to gain freedom from the world, and return to the true life. For each soul is potentially divine, and may obtain the oneness or divinity through "work, worship, psychic control, or philosophy; by one, or more, or all of these".[5]

The first impulse of the Western mind is to reject such statements as these as highly unsatisfactory. But let us not be deceived by words, but seek the truth in this difficult doctrine of *mâyâ*. We may hope to grasp its significance only by making repeated attempts. For, the Vedânta is the profoundest of all spiritual monistic philosophical systems, and no one should expect to grasp its true meaning until he shall have penetrated beneath the letter to the spirit, beneath the Sanskrit terms, which are often mistranslated, to the spiritual insight which prompted their use.

Shoshee Chunder Dutt,[6] attempting to explain this doctrine, says:

> "Dissatisfied with his own solitude, Brahman, feels a desire to create worlds, and then the volution ceases so far as he is

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[5] See Swâmi Vivekânanda: ***Râja Yoga Philosophy*** Walter Goodyear, New York.

[6] Quoted by James Freeman Clark, ***Ten Great Religions;*** Vol. I. p. 118.

> concerned, and he sinks again into his apathetic happiness, while the desire, thus willed into existence, assumes an active character. It becomes *mâyâ*, and by this was the universe created, without exertion on the part of Brahman. This passing wish of Brahman, carried, however, no reality with it. And the creation proceeding from it is only an illusion * * The universe is, therefore, all illusion, holding a position between something and nothing. It is real as an illusion, but unreal as a being. It is not true, because it has no essence; but not false, because its existence, even as illusion, is from God. The Vedânta declares: 'From the highest state of Brahman to the lowest condition of a straw, all things are delusion'."

This explanation, however, does not carry us very far. Vivekânanda informs us[7] that *mâyâ* is mistranslated as "illusion," since illusion would also have to be explained by illusion, and that by some other illusion. *Mâyâ* is not a mere abstract term, but *a statement* in regard to life as we find it today. The present life is only the mystic twilight of real existence. We are but half awake, and all our knowledge, our religion, philosophy, betrays the haziness of this dreamy existence. In the world of physical sensation we see nothing as it truly is. We were born into this mystical realm: we live, think, and dream in it, all the time seeking to grasp it as it really is, but constantly failing. From the Vedântist's point of view, it is impossible while within *mâyâ*, or this dream life, fully to know its meaning. For, the intellect cannot apprehend Reality; it is bound by unconquerable limitations; it sees all things in the form of a paradox, a contradiction. It perceives or represents things under the forms of space and time, but cannot for that reason know things as they are, or in themselves, outside of space and time. The intellect separates, divides, analyzes, but the Reality of things is One. We are under the spell of this encompassing *mâyâ*, "which is the belief which your dreamy self has, for a time, in the independent or separate existence of the vision,—as a thing apart, with an objective existence about which you

[7] See *The Brahmavâdin*, May 8, 1897.

think or feel. It is this mystic peculiarity of thought hiding its real character and assuming an aspect which gives rise to an independent world of material existence, that is *mâyâ*".[8]

We must not then attribute ultimate significance to *mâyâ*. It is that from which we are to seek absolute escape. It is no part of the one existence, nor does it manifest the One. "The Absolute does not come within *mâyâ*".[9]

Creation is but an illusion and has made no noumenal or real addition to the one permanent entity which alone comprises the universe.[10] Ignorance creates in us the false conviction that this is a real, substantial world. With the destruction of this ignorance all its creations disappear.[11] We do not know how this ignorance came into existence and acquired such power for evil, and why *Brahman* permitted himself to be conditioned by *avidyâ* (ignorance) and entered upon the work of creation".[12]

Yet the statements of exponents of the Vedânta are not always consistent on this point. First we are told that the world is purposeless, and does not manifest the One, then a meaning is attributed to it. A writer in *The Dawn*, August, 1897, translates from the *Gitâ* (Chap. IV., sl. 9) as follows:

> "Even though I am unborn (having no birth), even though I am imperishable, even though I transcend the elements, yet through *mâyâ* (the power of making things appear what they in reality are not) I incarnate myself."

Again,[13] we are told that the Vedânta teaches that the Infinite has become the finite, that the universe is the

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[8] *The Dawn, August* 1897.

[9] Swâmi Vivekânanda: *Harvard Address*, p. 29.

[10] *The Advaita Philosophy*, p. 7.

[11] *Ibid*, p. 6.

[12] *Ibid*, p. 8.

[13] *The Brahmavâdin*, August 4, 1897.

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Absolute under limitations; it is *Brahman* trying to express himself in the finite. But a time will come when he will find that this is impossible and will "beat a retreat." This beating a retreat will be the beginning of a real discovery of his true Self. There is a degree of reality, therefore, in *mâyâ,* for it is in truth the one existence, perceived through the limitations of finite conciousness, precisely as we seem to be groping after something in our dreams, something that is ever intangible while we dream.

> "All that we call the world is really the *Brahman,* because nothing else exists; but we do not see it as it really is, on account of our 'ignorance'. The world we know is not real, nor is it unreal. We may compare it to our view of the sun, as we see it from the earth. With a telescope we see it differently, yet it is the same sun. If we can conceive ourselves as gradually travelling towards it, we shall see it aparently changing, until, when we reach it, we shall find it as it really is, and undoubtedly totally unlike the sun it first appeared to be, yet all the time the sun must have remained unchanged, and only our point of view has been the varying factor. So it is with this world of ours. No two of us see it just alike, because of the differences in our points of view. In fact, we literally make our own world, each for himself or herself. The suggestion comes from outside, but that is not the world we see. All we know is the reaction from that suggestion, which we ourselves project and which forms the world for us."[1]

The Vedânta does not, therefore, say the world is a mere delusion. On the other hand, the Vedântists say that it is real; nay, that it is eternal. But its reality and its eternity are only relative for it exists and can exist only in and through *Brahman,* the changeless Substance. When *Brahman* is realized, the world or *mâyâ* no longer exists, and until then it is an existence which no one should deny. We can call a dream a dream only after we are awake; and similarly, no man should call the world an illusion until he has awakened, realized the *Brahman*, ceased to be a man, and become God.[2]

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[1] *The Brahmavâdin,* January 16, 1897.

From the Vedântist's point of view, then, there is no permanent value in finite individuality and nature; pleasure and pain, are alike dismissed as products of *mâyâ*. A man may search the world in vain to find anything continuously satisfactory. "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Even love shall prove disappointing, illusory.

> "Surrounded by fools on every side, we think we are the only learned men. Surrounded by all sorts of fickleness, we think our love is the only lasting love. How can that be? Even love is selfish, and the Yogi says that in the end we shall find that even the love of husbands and wives, and children and friends, slowly decays. Decadence seizes everything in this life. It is only when everything, even love, fails, that with a flash man finds out how vain, how dreamlike is this world * * It is only by giving up this world that the other comes; never through holding on to this one".[3]

So long as there is desire, no real happiness can come.[4] Happiness, peace, and satisfaction come only by transcending all that is illusory and temporary, by entering the superior realm, through *samâdhi* or superconsciousness, where the illusion vanishes. As creation with its accompaniments, misery, transformation, and death, began just at that point where the mind thought, ignorantly of course, that it was separate from the *Atman*,[5] so freedom shall come again with the return to the former state. "Man comes from God in the beginning, in the middle he becomes man, and in the end he goes back to God."

The truth, then, which this doctrine of *mâyâ* seeks to express, is that all outer or visible things are perishable.

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2. *The Prabuddha Bhârata*, September, 1897.
3. See Vivekânanda: *Râja Yoga Philosophy*, p. 162.
4. *Ibid*, p. 82.
5. *The Prabuddha Bhârata*, April, 1897.

This is not the Reality which we taste, and touch, and see. This is not that Truth for which the heart longs, which shall satisfy the soul. It is the appearance, the veil or covering, precisely as the perishable garment worn by your friend is not the real object of your love, but the spirit, the heart, behind this fleshly tenement. The universe is but the representation, the projection of the great All. We are encompassed by a great mist; we behold only fragments of the real Being. We cannot see or know anything as it really is, because we are unable as yet to see all things at once, to dispel the fog and rise to the limitless vision. But, meanwhile, there is the One without a second, that Essence, lying in eternal repose, of which we now dream, and toward which we aspire. All that now is, shall pass, and we shall know even as we are known; for in deepest truth there is somewhat behind all this *mâyâ*. *Mâyâ* is not mere emptiness, not absolute deception; but a transitory vision, "as in a glass darkly," of an eternal selfhood existing behind.

The same illusion or impermanence applies also to rebirth or reincarnation. It may surprise some to learn that this theory of rebirth, usually deemed a central doctrine of the Vedânta, is not regarded as a part of the real truth of life. It is deemed true only of our sense life. From this point of view, reincarnation is said to explain the injustice, the inequality of human life, and to account for all our suffering. We are personally responsible for our misery; it is futile to charge it against someone else, to believe it the work of Providence, who has seen fit to send it upon us. Ignorance is the sole cause of our bondage, the only reason we are compelled to work, to be born again and again. We suffer and accumulate misdeeds, or bad *karma*, because we erroneously deem ourselves separate beings, because we do not know that we are *Brahman*. In reality, we are eternal and perfect, and have no need of rebirth.[1] When we learn this great truth, we attain the true vision of ourselves; then shall our self-imposed misery cease; then shall we remain no longer slaves, but free; then shall all *karma* cease, and with it all that now keeps us apart from the infinity of peace and bliss, the eternal oneness which all along has been the only Reality, the true existence.

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[1] See *The Prabuddha Bhârata*, May, 1897.

Reincarnation is only a working hypothesis, an attempt to account for a phase of our dream life or *mâyâ,* while we are still bound by it. "It is not a dogma that must be believed in order to obtain salvation. The various Yogas, or methods of reaching liberation, can be pursued successfully by any earnest and sincere follower without his ever having heard of reincarnation. The Advaita, or the purely philosophical side of Vedânta, throws this doctrine entirely out of the question, as being, at best, only an explanation of the apparent, and as having no place at all in the real, which is One and not many".[2]

"Again,[3] there is no change in the soul whatsoever * * Neither can there be any birth or death. Dying and being born, reincarnation and going to heaven, cannot be with the soul. These are different appearances, mirages."

I have quoted thus at length from recent expositions of the Vedânta in order to avoid all possibility of misconception, and to let the doctrine speak for itself, for, it is practically impossible for the Western mind to grasp the full significance of this philosophy unless it be expressed in our own terminology. The fact is that this has been done so successfully by the Hindus themselves, may be taken as an evidence of the universality of the Vedânta. On the other hand, the constant employment by the Swâmis of the terms and data of Western science is a tacit confession that our science is a distinct advance on that of the Orient. It is also a noteworthy fact that the pessimistic and fatalistic elements

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2. S. E. Waldo, in *The Brahmavâdin*, March 27, 1897.
3. *The Brahmavâdin*, May 22, 1897.

of the Vedânta are left in the background. There is a tendency to adopt the more hopeful doctrine of the West. A wise man has said, that if a Swâmi should live six years among us, those years would witness a marked change in his views.

It is important, therefore, to remember that the expositions of the Vedânta, which we have recently heard in this country, state the doctrine of the Vedas in a somewhat modified or advanced form. For the original doctrine, shorn of modern terminology, we must turn to the sacred books themselves; while in the works of Schopenhauer, and his disciple Deussen, we may read the pessimistic phase of the Vedânta, where The *will to live* is carried out to its logical consequences, and the whole vast fabric of nature is treated as a representation of our transitory intellects projecting a phenomenal universe through the (Kantian) forms of space and time.[1] A more thorough study of the Vedânta would, therefore, lead us to consider this philosophy in its relation to Kant and post-Kantian idealism, to the modern doctrine of evolution and the latest results of psychology and psychical research, concluding with an analysis of its pessimism as brought out by Schopenhauer, and its Pantheism as interpreted by Emerson.

Without attempting this more technical analysis, I pass now to a consideration of a few inadequacies of the Vedânta looked at from our Western point of view, a prejudiced point of view if you will, but, at the same time, a point of view and a growing one. I approach this part of my paper, however, with considerable hesitation; for one dislikes to speak adversely of a doctrine whose hymns and sacred books are of so high a character. Surely, nowhere on this earth has a higher spiritual revelation been given than in India, and one feels its spirit to such a degree that one is sometimes tempted to say: It is all true, after all. And yet, and yet—is it infallible? Does the spiritual vision reveal all that is good and real? Does it solve all problems and absolutely account for the mystery of life? If not, there is every reason to ask wherein it fails, to apply the test of reason, to persist in the belief that reason can solve the great mystery.

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[1] See Paul Deussen: *Elements of Metaphysics*, Macmillan and Co.

In the first place, let us apply with Professor James,[1] the test which is coming to be regarded as the ultimate criterion of philosophy. What effect does it have upon conduct? It inspires peace, tranquility, passivity, contemplation of the Absolute; surely a noble result, and we cannot have too much of this spirit in our nervous Western world. But will this attitude solve the social problems which press so appealingly for solution? Max Müller in his lectures on the Vedânta says, that the self of the Vedânta has but three qualities: *it is, it perceives, it rejoices;* the Anglo-Saxon believes that the self *acts*, and *progresses*, that "the world belongs to the energetic man" as Emerson puts it. If it be true that *'aham-Brahmâsmi'*—'I am *Brahman'*, then I am perfect, absolute, and why should I break my repose to succour suffering humanity, whose sufferings after all are unreal? For, if I have once accepted the Advaita or non-dualistic philosophy, there is only "one without a second" (*Ekamevâdvitiyam*) and that 'I am He (*so'ham*), 'there is no incentive to finite action, no room is left for individual existence, regarded as a life of ultimate ethical and spiritual value.

The inspiring doctrine that each of us exists for a purpose, and may contribute permanently to the moral and spiritual order, has no place. Consequently, there is no vigorous stirring to life, no reason for the emphasis of individual thought, the cultivation of genius, the expression of self through art, literature, and conduct, or better social state. The Vedânta holds out no inducement to the human heart eager for personal fellowship, love, marriage. It does not encourage the scientific interest; it does not stimulate the traveller's spirit, the inventive genius, the creative impulse. All this is rather to be avoided; for it passes and proves disappointing. The true individuality is God, each of us is really God, and instead of cultivating individual genius or separateness, we should cultivate *oneness* or Godness.

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[1] Vide Deussen: *Elements of Metaphysics*, Macmillan & Co.

The Vedânta says unqualifiedly that you and I are God. We are not parts of God, appointed to stand for separate gifts, thereby adding glory to Him. Says Vivekânanda: "You and I and everything in the universe are that Absolute; not parts, but the whole. You are the whole of that Absolute".[1] *"Tat tvam asi,"* thou art that, thou art one with this universal Being, and every soul that exists is your soul, and every body that exists is your body".[2]

Under the Swâmi's famous pine at Green Acre, Vivekânanda said:[3]

"I am neither body nor changes of the body; nor am I senses nor object of the senses. I am Existence Absolute; Bliss Absolute; Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It.

"I am neither death nor fear of death; nor was I ever born nor had I parents. I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. I am It. I am It.

"I am not misery nor have I misery. I am not enemy nor have I enemies. I am Existence Absolute; Knowledge Absolute; Bliss Absolute. I am It. I am It.

"I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond time; I am in everything, I am the basis of the universe—everywhere am I. I am Existence Absolute; Bliss Absolute; Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It."

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[1] *Green Acre Voice,* II: xxii.

[2] *The Brahmavâdin* May 22, 1897.

[3] Vide *Green Acre Voice.*

The confusion of the part with the whole, is, therefore, a fundamental objection to Vedânta. "It first says, truly, 'There is nothing without God.' It next says, falsely, 'There is nothing but God'."[4]

It is thus pure monism or pantheism, the absolute identification of subject and object with no room for the splendidly elaborate system of nature as the realm of Divine manifestation. It endeavours to put off the creation of the world upon man, but it proves unreal. It tries to put it upon *Brahman*, but cannot, because that would imply imperfection. Thus our fair world, infinitely rich in design, which has ever been the wonder of men, is put off with no one to father it, unreal, because it is not God, yet existent because of his not pure delusion. The Vedânta thus fails to *explain* the world, and thus failing, it puts aside as too difficult the great problem we are all trying to solve.

> "Oriental pantheism", says Sterrett,[5] "is justly the horror of our religious mind. Instead of making God the spiritual, ethical unity of all things, it makes him either the quantitative sum total of them or denies any reality to them. In either way it makes far too little of the place, and worth, and destiny of man. Consciousness is conceived as a temporary finite, unsubstantial phase of the immobile *Brahman*."

Again, it subordinates human reason. The motive of all Western philosophy is the endeavour to explain the universe, to rationalize it in accordance with a universally valid intelligible principle. "Whatever is real, is rational; whatever is rational, is real" says Hegel. But the Vedânta assumes that the reverse is true. "The very fact that we have a knowledge of the material universe", says

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4. James Freeman Clarke: *Ten Great Religions*, I : 83.
5. Vide *Hegle's*: *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 206.

N. Vaithianathen,[1] "presupposes its unreality; for, if real, it cannot be known." Reality is, therefore, unknowable, and we have on our hands all the inconsistencies of the conception long ago rejected—except by followers of Spencer—as an absurdity.

The Vedântists first assure us that no attribute can be predicated of *Brahman*: "attributes belong to perishable illusions and perish along with them." He then proceeds to describe Brahman, namely, that you and I are *That* He is such that He could not create with a purpose, yet permits Himself to be "covered with blinding *mâyâ*." "From his state of eternal bliss, he descends to the act of creation only when the pre-existing *mâyâ* envelopes him in utter darkness." "He is the spectator of his creative work and stands unaffected by it. He perceives the world as we perceive it, but does not fall into the illusion that it is a true entity, as we do".[2]

> "This universe is one connected mass, so that if you start from the external you come to the internal, and *vice versa*. It has come out from the infinite ocean and will go back into it again. The creation is as eternal as the Creator himself. It sometimes remains in the unmanifested state and sometimes in the seed form—an eternal flow of evolution and involution—the play of the infinite".[3]

It is clear, then, that there is either a glaring inconsistency here, or a marked divergence of opinion among exponents of the Vedânta. That the latter is in part the explanation of the discrepancy is evident from the fact that there are many different systems of thought in India. A writer in *The Brahmavâdin* of January 2, 1897, explains that according to Sankara, the great expounder of the

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[1] *The Advaita Philosophy*, p. 10.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 21.

[3] Swâmi Saradânanda: *Metaphysical Club Address*, December 15, 1896.

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Vedânta, the *Brahman* is ever one and the same, the diversity of nature being due to our ignorance; while according to Râmânuja, the *Brahman* is the real source of the marvellous variety which we behold all about us. Sankara's "ultimate reality is a unity without plurality; Râmânuja's reality is a unity in plurality, a potentially composite unity, * * endowed with all imaginable attributes and excellences and comprehending within himself all power * *. The universe is regarded as one mighty and majestic organism fully permeated by the spirit of God." The "one without a second" is the potential condition, out of which all souls and worlds eventually proceed.

Here we have evidences of a more advanced intellectual system, approaching the Western ideal. But the Vedânta in its pure form is emphatically monistic and paradoxical. The Advaitist declares that "the *Brahman* alone exists; it is all-embracing, attributeless, and unknowable." The world is an illusory fabric "reared by *avidyâ* (ignorance) upon the false testimony of the senses," and is an "*absolute* illusion." Yet the world is also declared to be the work of "ultimate causes". "The capital creator has to adapt his creative work to the results which necessarily belong to the *karma* of each soul, and creation is but an evolution out of the germs, material and spiritual, embedded in the conglomerate *mâyâ*".[1]

According to the Vedânta, however, these inconsistencies are of slight consequences, for one should not expect to know reality through reason, or that in us which seeks consistency. Vivekânanda knows enough about the "unknowable" to state positively that "God does not think; He does not reason; why should He? Is anything unknown to Him? * * When you step beyond thought and all reasoning, then you have made the first step towards God".[2]

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1. *The Advaita Philosophy*, pp. 9, 19, 26.
2. *Râja Yoga Philosophy*, p. 102.

But why, the critic might ask, is it not right to reason about the universe, and deem it rational, if, as Vivekânanda assures us,[3] the universe is "the Infinite Existence projected into the plane of consciousness," and since "the universe is harmonious, it must be the manifestation of one will"? The Western mind insists that whether the universe sprang from purpose or from caprice, whether real or illusory, it is still capable of being understood in accordance with one rational principle. There is nothing which shall not yield to reason, though it be irrationality itself; for rationalization of things is systematization in the light of their origin. If, therefore, we really *knew* that the world is either *mâyâ* or a purposive system of self-manifestation, we know something about Reality as the rational ground of the world. Or, if we know with Vivekânanda,[4] that "the real existence is without manifestation," once more our knowledge is rational and on this basis we can develop a system.

But the objections to the Vedânta are not alone philosophical; it leaves room neither for ethics nor for morality, or ethics in practice. This seemed an astonishing statement, one which lovers of the Vedânta and of the Swâmis would emphatically deny. "No one," says Swâmi Saradânanda,[5] "can rise to the highest stage of spirituality without being perfectly and absolutely pure and high in morals." No one would dispute this. I would not for a moment doubt the high purpose which inspires the Swâmis. One of the gentlest, sweetest, most broadly sympathetic and spiritual men of my acquaintance is a Swâmi (Master), who once declared to me that if he ever found a larger system of Vedânta he would at once accept it. But it is one thing to inculcate and practise morality in a universe of *mâya*, and quite another to regard the entire *real* universe as moral, every human soul as an ethically distinct self, and the moral law as supreme purposive worth to the living God.

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[3] *Râja Yoga Philosophy*, pp. 124, 136.

[4] *Harvard Address*, p. 46.

[5] *The Brahmavâdin*, December 5, 1896.

If we say with Vivekânanda: "You are all God * *. Is not the whole universe you?" what ground is left for righteous conduct, the basis of which is responsibility to a superior Power, to a high moral ideal or sense of duty? The Vedânta replies that one ought not to injure one's neighbour, because one would be injuring one's self. "If a man cuts your throat, do not say no, for you are cutting your own throat".[1] "In loving anyone, you love yourself." But this is egoism. The essence, the beauty of love is, to love another, to deny one's self for another. The moral idea is that which inspires me to arise above myself.[2] It is a duty, an obligation. The existence of the moral law implies that there are at least two beings in the world. It implies that individual, ethical man really exists, not merely seems to exist; that he possesses power of choice and will; that he acts separately; that his acts are right or wrong, not in *mâyâ*, but as judged by an eternal law, or by the higher Being, who imposes the obligation. Of what meaning would all this be if we only seemed to act,[3] if our moral life is to pass away with the decay of the intellect? Why should we strive, why not at once give up the attempt?

Let us hear from an authority whom the Swâmis quote because of his hearty acceptance of Vedântism and of the philosophy of Schopenhauer.

> "There can be no such thing as duties toward ourselves. For all duty * * rests on an expressed or tacit contract according to which I freely undertake to perform certain things. If I do not fulfiill these, I do wrong, unless the other releases me from my obligation. Now, if I am that other myself, no

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1. Swâmi Vivekânanda: *Râja Yoga Philosophy*, p. 246.
2. See W. M. Salter: *Ethical Religion*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston.
3. See the February, *Arena*, p. 164.

> release is necessary, and thus it becomes clear that the conceptions wrong, right, and duty can have a meaning only in reference to others".[1]

Again an ethical authority of the highest standing James Martineau, says:[2] "Nothing can be binding on us that is not higher than we; and to speak of *one part of self-imposing obligation on another part*—of one impulse or affection playing, as it were, the *god* to another—is to trifle with the real significance of the sentiments that speak within us * * I am deeply persuaded that no monistic scheme, whether its starting-point be self, or Nature, or God, can ever interpret, without distorting, or expunging, the facts on which our nature and life are built."

It is absurd then to say: "Do not tell a lie," if you are really telling a lie to yourself. You, of course, know the truth, and therefore cannot lie to yourself. A lie becomes such only when told to another who is deceived by it. Is not this *fact* of ethical separateness worth more than all the speculation in the world? Is there any real basis of philosophy but this actual, present, struggling world of finite beings, conscious of right and wrong, and living in a beautiful world of nature, thinking, searching, evolving, trying to formulate the conception of a Being who is achieving some high purpose through nature and through our moral conflicts? Is there any reason in the nature of things as actually revealed, why God may not be dependent on us so far as His plan for each of us is concerned; any reason for thinking that He is not moving forward with us?

Again, if all existence is one "block,"[3] to borrow Professor James's terse expression, what ground is left for freedom, for chance or possibility? How can anything new appear? How can there be a moral choice? Why should the world exist at all?

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[1] Deussen: *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 285.

[2] *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. II, Introduction, p. 5.

[3] Vide *The Will to Believe*; Longmans, Green & Co.

The Vedânta tries to escape from this difficulty by an appeal to the same inconsistency which we have noted throughout. Freedom is declared to be the very essence of *karma*. One should obey the precept of the great law-giver Manu: "Think not on destiny, but act thyself." *Karma* is, therefore, an incentive to action and is opposed to fatalism, which means the denial of ethics. But "the doctrine of the freedom of the will is only the esoteric doctrine of the Vedânta. For free will depends on self-consciousness, or false individuality, the destruction of which is the one lesson of the *Upanishads*. The individual soul is really a figment of nescience (*mâyâ*), and when it realizes its falsity and loses itself, like a river in the sea, into the one Reality; in other words, when the truth of such sayings as, "O Svetaketu, *that* art thou,' 'the self is all this,' and the like is realized, the individual will disappear and with its freedom and its bondage."[1]

Of what value then is our freedom, if it belongs to our dream life? Is freedom truly such unless it be eternal? Is the ethical individual of any consequence if he be a figment of *mâyâ*? If we really knew this to be so, we might try to escape from the present life of duty, precisely as we are told to throw off the bondage or necessity of rebirth. But this would be to hold ethics in slight regard; egoism would be more laudable than altruism. This conclusion follows irresistibly if we first agree that all existence is One. The Western mind, however, proposes another alternative: Granted that the present life is a dream life, may not we who dream be real moral individuals whose future or waking state shall be, not less, but more moral than the present existence?[2] Surely, if we are real, ethical

1. *The Prabuddha Bhârata*, September, 1897.
2. See *Possibilities of the Moral Law* in April, *Arena*

beings, partaking of a dream life, which shall presently give place to true vision of things as they are, monism is disproved and, as the veil of *mâyâ* falls from our eyes, we shall be more distinctly ourselves, the variety of the universe shall be richer, and all that *mâyâ* revealed shall be there, not in mystical sameness, not in an infinite ocean, but in an ideal society, in the diversified republic of God.

It is easy to say that I have utterly failed to understand. But I am simply stating the demands of Western thought, with the suggestion that these demands are worthy of the consideration of those who deem the Vedânta supperior at all points to Occidental philosophy. The demand of the Anglo-Saxon is for a heaven which shall give ever freer scope to his longing for individual action. The Vedânta proposes *Karma Yoga*[1] or the life of action suited to those in whom the active nature is predominant, and it offers an admirable doctrine of self-mastery and introspection. One admits that many of our precepts must be adapted to needs of the transitory existence. One agrees that the inner life is the real life, and that one should not become too strongly attached to the present order. It is probable that a large part of our activity is misspent energy; and life will surely appear very different to us when *mâyâ* ends. But admitting all this, admitting that in some respects one of two alternatives, either these present duties are of ultimate worth, reason is to be trusted, and one is to believe in one's finite self; or, having concluded that all is God, one is to make all else correspond. For, no man can serve two masters. We must decide and we must act. And if we decide that the meaning of life is to be found in individual ethical conduct, we must proceed on the basis of the real separate existence of our fellow mortals, the belief that even our dream life is purposive, and that the universe is the real existence of an ultimate Being, in whose diversified nature, the ground of all variety, of all individuals, and all worlds, is to be found.

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[1] See an admirable book on this subject by Vivekânanda.

But it is an ungracious task to criticize. Vedântists may have some way of meeting these objections, so that from their point of view all may be harmonious. One should not expect all truth to come from one source. The Vedântists have symbolized the great universe as it appeals most strongly to them. The chief beauty of the Vedânta, as expounded by the Swâmis, is in the diversity of their interpretations. I think all who have heard the three Swâmis who have thus far come to us would say that each produced a Vedântic poem whose specific beauty was attributeless in the last analysis to personality. People cared more for Vivekânanda than for his metaphysics, and so the Western point of view receives fresh emphasis from these Eastern men.

They are specialists in the interpretation of the spiritual synthesis of things. For knowledge of the wonderfully wrought world of nature we must turn to the Occidental specialist, just as in the study of the moral law we should follow ethical philosophers of the highest order, such as Martineau, Green, Kant.[1] There is the art world, the literary world, the world of human society. These must be interpreted by the artist, the literary man, the father and mother; not by one who has never lived in a home where woman holds highest place.

If we are true to this larger ideal, and do not become mere Orientalists or mere Occidentalists, if we still believe in and try to express unselfish love, while looking beyond all finite approximations to the One who is in deepest truth all love, all beauty, and all reason, we may yet verify in one great philosophy all that is noblest in both hemispheres of thought and life. Thus shall dawn the universal Christ-consciousness, a realm of life toward whose comprehension

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1. Récéjac has developed a system of mysticism founded on the ethics of Kant, true to reason, to the heart, and God, which avoids the objectionable conclusions of the Vedânta: *The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge*, translated by S. C. Upton; Scribners, New York.

the seers of all ages have contributed their share; not Jesus alone, nor the Hindus, but Socrates and the other great Greeks, Kant and his followers, the life of the Anglo-Saxon and the spiritual gentleness of the East. In the East this great light has dawned. In the West its full glory shall shine.

Boston. HORATIO W. DRESSER.

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

1. *TEACHINGS OF THE VEDAS.*[2]

The article by Horatio W. Dresser, in *THE ARENA* for October, 1899, entitled *An Interpretation of the Vedânta,* interested me as a student of that comprehensive philosophy, and also because of the logical deductions based on his conception of the outcome of the Hindu metaphysical system as expounded in many passages quoted from learned authorities. While his conclusions are different from my own, I admit that they are amply warranted if the Vedas are to be judged from his point of view. It has ever been a peculiarity of Hindu teachers, notably of the writers of their sacred books, to hide the real truth within the mere letter, while seeming to give out deepest wisdom. This arises from various causes, all of which appeal but faintly to us in the West. A circumlocutory style, replete with mystery and symbolism, is born from the belief that certain truths should not be given out promiscuously—that they should at least be wrested for; thus insuring appreciation on the part of the victor, whose intuitive faculties, strengthened thereby, shall enable him to proceed to higher, deeper, and broader truths that are otherwise unattainable. This national trait has caused even that eminent scholar,

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[2] See *The Arena,* February 1900, Vol. XXIII, No. 2.

Max Müller, to look on some of the *Upanishads* as the childish fables of an immature age; yet those passages, so lightly esteemed, are said to conceal the deepest occult wisdom.

I will endeavour to outline, as concisely as may be, some of the underlying meanings of the Vedas as expounded by my own teachers. In this attempt I shall avoid, when possible, all technical terms and metaphysical subtleties, believing that simplicity and clearness are of greater moment than any pedantic show of learning, which so often tends to mystify and fatigue rather than to elucidate.

In the great epic of India, The *Mahâbhârata,'* said to have been written or compiled by the sage Vyâsa, occurs that episodical work, *The Bhagavada Gitâ,* the book of devotion— a work held in great esteem by all sects in Hindusthan. Its eighteen chapters are the record of an extended colloquy between Krishna, who represents the supreme Spirit, and Arjuna, the human monad, or man. Herein the principle system of thought then current in India are shown to be essentially the same in purpose and effect, notwithstanding that surface appearances would indicate the contrary. In the tenth chapter Krishna postulates the fundamental conception of Vedânta in these words: "I establish the whole universe with a single portion of myself and remain separate"—words similar in meaning to the saying of Plato: "The universe is composed of the Same and the Other." Now, what relation does the Same sustain to the Other in the Hindu system, which denies the creative act as we understand it?—for therein to "create" is but to *veil* or *unveil* that primordial Substance which never was not, and which stands and shall stand.

Let us conceive of the manifested universe as a conglomeration of sentient, vibrating atoms, each passing through its own peculiar evolutionary process and urged onward throughout the eternities by some unceasing force. The Unmanifested is that which fulfils and transcends all we can imagine of wisdom, love, and power. It is perhaps better to consider the Unmanifested as attributeless; for so the Vedântists have escaped the gross idea which the ancient Hebrews formed of their Jehovah—an idea from which we at this day are but partially free; for, our highest conceptions of love, for example, are tinged with some human element of partiality.

The unmanifested *Brahman* and the manifested *Brahman* are in their totality "That" which is uncreated and unending. The ever-unmanifested permeates every atom of the manifested, but is unperceived and unperceiveable by means of the senses thereof; it is, therefore, said to remain separate, but, in fact, it upholds and sustains the manifested, which is at-one-ment with it in essence and potentiality. The manifested universe sprang into being through the reawakening of desire, which had slept, even as do *our* feverish and restless desires after the day's activity.

Universes have been: a new universe is to be—when the stupendous night is ended whose eye shall see the extinction and dissolution of the great central suns of our stellar systems.

Was the great driving force, *desire*, something inherent within the undeveloped atoms, or monads; or was it "breathed" into them—to become their breath of manifested life? This is a moot question, though it seems probable that the former view is correct. The Absolute, the Perfect, the for-ever Concealed, surely cannot be subject to the ebb and flow of any attribute; therefore, when we are told that *Brahman* feels a desire to create worlds, the hidden meaning is that desire has reawakened within the unperfected atoms. This desire was exhausted but not annihilated by friction. Not until the atom is able to move in harmonious course with every other atom can its force be preserved intact. There is no being in the manifested universe that moves free and unobstructed in perfect harmony with every part thereof; therefore, all things, even the most highly evolved intelligences, are subject to change of condition due to weakened power. The universal reawakened energies are symbolized by the out-breathing of *Brahman*: their final weakening by his in-breathing.

The friction of two bits of wood or metal produces an evanescent spark; so worlds and all creatures are born of primal fire, and owe their temporary objectivity to the mutual friction and resulting vibration of particles. This friction and this vibration are due to the illusion of separateness, which causes even in the mineral kingdom those antagonisms noted by the chemist, and all those "natural enmities" we observe in the animal kingdom—enmities to which man, alas! is by nature prone. The great lessons this philosophy strives to inculcate are: (1) the cultivation of equal-mindedness—in other words, avoidance of all the repulsions of hate and those attractions that circumscribe the soul; (2) the consequent lessening of friction; and (3) the ultimate conservation of energy. This desideratum cannot be attained by imitating the oyster or tortoise, which at every alarm seeks safety within its shell. In the *Gitâ*, Krishna says: "Children only, and not the wise, speak of renunciation of action and of right performance of action as being different; he who perfectly practises the one receives the fruit of both." Again: "A man enjoyeth not freedom from action from the non-commencement of that which he hath to do, nor doth he obtain happiness from the total abandonment of action." "Know that action comes from the supreme Spirit, who is One." "There is nothing, O son of Prithâ, in the three regions of the universe that is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain that I have not obtained; yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Prithâ. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish."

It was known to the elaborators of the Vedas, and to all the great sages of India, that the bodily appetites and passions of man are physical manifestations of eternal forces that cannot be annihilated by the chilling touch of old age—nor even by the disruption of soul and body. Satiated and deadened for a time, these desires must eventually reassert their mastery, and blinding the weak-willed and yielding soul, tempt it into its old condition of time and space; for, according to this philosophy, time and space are finite limitations arbitrarily imposed upon the one indivisible Reality, and owe their phenomenal existence to the operations of selfish, deluding desire, which, although the cause of the idea of separateness, which would hold the soul to its own peculiar environment, however, gross, by its innate love of possession. Rebirth is, therefore, the logical result; and yet that which would disgrace the ego is in truth the soiled insignia of its God-hood. If the eternal energies in man can be brutalized, so, on the other hand, they can be transmuted into every beatific virtue; for this latter alone they exist. To help man to overcome—to show him the way to bliss—every world-saviour came each in his appointed time. If that which in reality is immaterial becomes material or apprehensible to the senses—themselves the product of vibration and friction—through the vibration and frictions of crude desires, it follows that a permanent condition above vicissitude can only be obtained by any form of manifested life through the refining and uplifting of every form of desire. This I apprehend to be the great central lesson of the Vedas It means freedom from the *cause* of rebirth—ability on the part of the soul to sustain itself at lofty heights. Rebirth becomes even a matter of deliberate choice to the great souls whose comings have blessed the ages.

The four Vedas: the Rig (or the Book of verses), the Sâma (or the Book of chants), the Yajur (or the Book of sacrificial portion), and the Atharva (or the Book of magical incantations)—are the repositories of a great threefold system of science, religion, and philosophy. Within the apparent meaningless rigmaroles and childish fables of some of the *Upanishads* lies an explanation of the mysterious cause of the Newtonian law of gravitation, many hints concerning the nature of an opposing law of repulsion, and the means by which it can be brought into operation. Beneath the Hindu cosmogony can be found the nebular hypothesis of Lâplâce, and the key to many a treasury of knowledge which, to our modern materialistic science, still remains unlocked. To the authors of the Vedas science existed not for itself; they subordinated everything to the soul and its eternal well-being. For it alone their indivisible trinity of science, religion, and philosophy grew from the heart of things. By the Indian sages—and the Hindu thinkers of today have not altogether retrograded from the lofty position of his ancestors—all attempts to divide that essential unity and to treat its components as separate departments of knowledge and investigation were deemed profane and sacrilegious.

If we apply to the many-sided but withal symmetric whole of Vedic philosophy, or even to that small part which I have touched upon, Professor James's test question: "What effect does it have upon conduct?" the reply, it seems to me, can be not otherwise than a vindication of this system as a sane and useful one. What other religion offers so transcendent a prize? Nothing less than the Universe itself is to be the reward of faithful endeavour. To rest in the bosom of the All! Does this mean loss of individuality? The learned *Brâhmin,* Subbâ Row, in his lecture on the *Gitâ,* says in effect that when a man unites himself with the Logos—that is, attains *Nirvâna*—he experiences a feeling that he has absorbed the Logos within himself. This statement reminds us of the experience of him that sat beneath the sacred Bo-tree and felt the ties of illusion that had bound him part and fall away.

"The universe grows of *I.*" Those words of Buddha we should understand if we could comprehend that the Whole can and does focus itself in its every part; for this is the mysterious cause of its oneness. In truth, it focuses itself in the heart of the meanest thing as well as in the heart of the perfected sage. The difference between their contracting conditions is the difference between ignorance and knowledge. When the Swâmi Vivekânanda, standing beneath the evergreen pine—emblem of constancy and stability—uttered these words: "I am neither body nor changes of body; neither am I senses nor object of the senses; I am Existence Absolute, Bliss Absolute, Knowledge Absolute; I am It; I am It," he spoke in the language of prophecy, for at the base of his being was the *Atman* of the universe (his higher Self), awaiting, as it had awaited throughout the ages, his self-conscious recognition. Man is the young Hercules of Divine paternity, but born of Alcmene, or Mary, or Mâyâ—Is born of illusion, the earth-mother. Trials many and harsh must test his every fibre before he as conqueror may worthily fill his place—where sit the immortal gods.

Although the Vedic philosophy offers the one stupendous prize, it also warns the contestant that the road to attainment is rough and proportionately long, and no one can bear his burdens for him. But *pessimism* is, after all, the contracting minor chord sounding ever and anon in the great Vedic symphony, whose keynote is in the hopeful major mode. In common with every great religion, this one has aroused the innate fanaticism of extremists, who have sought some short and improper way "across lots" to the coveted goal. Some have tried to overcome carnal desires by mutilating the body, and some even have sought to deffect the natural energy from their appropriate channel for the exercise of infernal arts. Others, severing all intercourse with their fellow-men, have led useless lives of mere meditation on the mystic "Om", not knowing in their blindness and selfish egotism that it is only through the enlargement of man's sympathy with his fellow-men and all creatures that he can come into at-one-ment with them, and so, ever expanding the circle of his attachments, finally encompass the world, aye, the universe, in the all-enfolding arms of Love. Thus only may he understand and reach the "Om". So must he attain who would find the "secondless Eternal", and, finding that Eternal, be one with it in Being, Consciousness, and Bliss.

Edward C. Farnsworth.

Portland, Me.

ADDENDA

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

II The Correct Interpretation:

A Reply[1]

After reading Mr. Dresser's article in the October number of *The Arena,* I feel it my duty as a representative of the Vedânta philosophy in America to say a few words, with the Editor's permission, on the same subject. I also wish to correct some of Mr. Dresser's misinterpretations of the Vedânta, for the benefit of the many American students of this philosophy—the grandest the world has ever produced.

In the first place, it is not confined to any book or scripture. It is true that the word *Vedânta* is a Sanskrit compound consisting of "Veda" and "anta" and means "end of Veda;" but by the word *Veda* is meant "wisdom", and not any book or scripture. The etymology of the noun "Veda" is the Sanskrit root-verb "Vid," to know—from which the English word wisdom is derived. The word 'anta' means "end"; therefore, Vedânta means "end of wisdom." Hence, secondarily, the Vedânta means the writings that explain what that end is and how it can be attained.

The Vedânta philosophers do not confine themselves to any particular book, but refer to passages from the sayings of the most ancient Vedic sages, so that their opinions may be corroborated by the oldest Seers of Truth: since, in writing a philosophy, reference would naturally be made to the sayings of more ancient philosophers, prophets, and spiritual teachers—such as Jesus and Buddha—to show the similarity of ideas, or harmony of thought. Professor Max Müller understood this when he wrote: "And here we should mark a curious feature of orthodox Indian philosophy. Though Vedânta appeals to the Veda, it appeals to it not as having itself grown out of it or as belonging to it, but rather as an independent witness looking back to it for sanction and confirmation."

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[1] *The Arena*, February 1900, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, p. 113.

The next point in which Mr. Dresser's explanation is in error, and which puzzles most Western minds, is the meaning of the word *mâyâ*. This term never means "illusion", in the sense that word is ordinarily used, but means conditional, relative, or phenomenal existence. The world, according to the Vedânta, is not unreal, but conditional in its existence—the name and form of the world being a constantly changeable phase of Reality. The most beautiful definition of *mâyâ* is given by Sankarâchârya, the great commentator and exponent of the Vedânta philosophy: "*Mâyâ* is the name of that Divine Energy which is inscrutable and beginningless; which produces the phenomenal name and form, or, in other words, the mental and physical phenomena, and contains the three properties of matter and force—inertia, activity, and equilibrium of various forces, and whose existence can be proved by the inductive method of logic. It is neither absolute Reality nor absolute unreality; but it is the conditional, relative, or phenomenal reality." *Mâyâ* is also called *Prakriti* in the Upanishads and in the Sankhya philosophy. It is the same as *procreatrix* in Latin—the creative energy of the absolute *Brahman*.

Mr. Dresser says: "Yet the statements of the exponents of the Vedânta are not always consistent." I am sorry to have to contradict our friend on this point; but I must say—what all exponents of the Vedanta have reiterated—that the purpose of the evolution of *mâyâ*, or eternal Energy, is to help each individual soul or ego to attain to the highest state of spiritual perfection through the realization of its Divine nature.

Again, Mr. Dresser says: "We are told that the Vedânta teaches that the Infinite has become finite."

Either Mr. Dresser has been misinformed or he failed to comprehend the meaning of the passage that led him to think thus. The Vedânta never teaches so illogical a doctrine. On the contrary, it refutes all such statements and points out their fallacy. It does not teach that "there is a degree of reality in *mâyâ.*" It holds that there is a difference of degree in the *expression* of reality, and that difference is because of *mâyâ,* or relativity.

Mr. Dresser says: "From Vedântist's point of view, then, there is no permanent value in finite experience." On the contrary, the Vedânta teaches that every experience has a permanent value. Every stage of evolution is necessary for the progress of the individual soul. At every step of our finite experience we are learning something and helping ourselves in unfolding the higher powers latent within us.

"The truth then, which this doctrine of *mâyâ* seeks to express," says Mr. Dresser, "is that all outer or visible things are perishable." What a deep-thinking philosopher he must be who denies the perishable nature of what we taste, or touch, or see or perceive! Again he says: "The same illusion or impermanence applies also to rebirth, or reincarnation. It may surprise some to learn that this theory of rebirth, usually deemed a central doctrine of the Vedânta is not regarded as a part of the real truth of life. It is deemed true only of our sense-life." Any student of the Vedânta can see how greatly confused are the ideas in the mind of this writer. The Vedânta never teaches the birth, or death, or rebirth of the *Atman,* or Divine nature of man. It is the individual ego, or soul that reincarnates, or manifests its latent powers through the different stages of evolution—to fulfil its desires and to gain experience until perfection is reached and the highest state of spiritual realization is attained. The doctrine of reincarnation is not a mere "working hypothesis;" it is as true and demonstrable as the doctrine of evolution. Professor Huxley says: "None but hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of realities."

Mr. Dresser says: "It is also a noteworthy fact that the pessimistic and fatalistic elements of the Vedânta are left in the background. There is a tendency to adopt the more helpful doctrine of the West." From very ancient times, the Vedânta has taught neither pessimistic nor fatalistic doctrines. Its philosophy has inspired such thinkers as Emerson, Thoreau, Schopenhauer, Paul Deussen, and Max Müller. Max Müller says: "Indian philosophers are by no means dwelling for ever on the miseries of life. They are not whining and protesting that life is not worth living. That is not their pessimism. They simply state that they received the first impulse to philosophic reflection from the fact that there is suffering in the world. They evidently thought that in a perfect world suffering had no place; that it is something anomalous, something that ought at all events to be accounted for, and if possible overcome. Pain certainly seems to be an imperfection, and as such, may well have caused the question why it existed and how it could be annihilated. But this is not the disposition which we are accustomed to call *pessimism.* Indian philosophy contains no outcry against divine injustice, and in no way encourages suicidal expedients."

The Vedânta philosophy teaches how to enjoy eternal happiness in this life—by living the life of perfection and spiritual realization. As regards the fatalistic doctrines, the true student knows very well that the Vedânta teaches that we create our own fate, our own destiny, by our own works. This doctrine is not responsible for the pessimistic ideas of Buddhism, nor for Schopenhauer's opinions regarding the "will to live."

Mr. Dresser says: "Max Müller, in his lectures on the Vedanta says that the Self of the Vedânta has but three qualities: it is; it perceives; it rejoices. The Anglo-Saxon believes that the Self also *acts* and *progresses;* that the world belongs to the energetic man, as Emerson puts it." Mr. Dresser ought to learn the difference between the meaning of the Self that Max Müller speaks of and that of the Anglo-Saxon "self." Let the Professor explain what he meant:

"When we speak of the Self—in Sanskrit *Atman*—we should always remember that it is not what is commonly meant by the Ego, but that it lies far beyond it. What we commonly call our Ego is determined by space and time, by birth and death, by the environment in which we live, by our body, our senses, our memory, by our language, nationality, character, prejudices, and many other things. All these make up our Ego, or character; but they have nothing to do with our *Self*."

Thus we can understand that the *Atman*, or Self, or Divine Spirit of the *Vedânta* is not the same as the Anglo-Saxon self or ego, that "acts and progresses." The Vedânta philosophy leaves plenty of room for the activity and progress of the Anglo-Saxon self, which is not the perfect and absolute *Atman*. This, according to the Vedânta, is one with *Brahman*, or Divine Spirit of the universe.

Says Mr. Dresser: "If I have once accepted the Advaita or non-daulistic philosophy that there is only 'one without a second,' and that I am He, there is no incentive to finite action; no room is left for individual existence regarded as a life of ultimate ethical and spiritual value." According to *Vedânta* philosophers it is not easy to accept the non-dualistic position that the *Vedânta* teaches as the goal of all religions. It is not easy for an ordinary mortal, surrounded by all kinds of imperfections resulting from a life of worldliness and selfishness, to realize that non-dualistic spiritual state that enabled Jesus to declare, "I and my Father are one," and a Vedântic sage to say, "I am *Brahman*," or "I am one with absolute Spirit divine." Max Müller says:

"And yet, after lifting the *Self* above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, *Brahman* and *Atman*, these Vedânta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay, as a *sine qua non* for the attainment of that highest knowledge which brings the Soul back to its source and to its home and restores it to its true nature—to its true Selfhood in *Brahman*."

The same authority says elsewhere: "So much to show that the *Vedânta* philosophy, abstruse as its metaphysics are, has not neglected the important sphere of ethics; but that, on the contrary, we find ethics in the beginning, ethics in the middle, and ethics in the end, to say nothing of the fact that minds so engrossed with divine things as are the Vedânta philosophers are not likely to fall victims to the ordinary temptations of the world, the flesh, and other powers."

The Vedânta philosophy holds as much inducement to the "human heart eager for personal fellowship, love, and marriage," as Christ held by his life and teachings. Moreover, it encourages "scientific interest," and stimulates the "traveller's spirit, inventive genius, and creative impulse;" but at the same time it tells sincere seekers after the highest spiritual Truth that all these are on the lower plane of phenomenal appearances.

The Vedânta does not say "unqualifiedly that you and I are God;" but it teaches that the divine essence in man is the same as the divine essence of the universe. This is also the meaning of the formula *'Tat tvam asi'*—That thou art. Mr. Dresser says: "It is thus pure monism, or pantheism, the absolute identification of subject and object, with no room for the splendidly elaborate system of nature as the realm of divine manifestation," etc. Here he has some difficulty in understanding the difference between what he calls "pure monism" and pantheism. The purely monistic Vedânta does not teach that everything is God, but that the Reality of every phenomenal object in the universe is one absolute existence. To quote again from Max Müller: "It is easy for us to call those ancient explorers reckless adventurers, or dispose of them with the help of other names, such as mystic or pantheist—often but half understood by those who employ them." The Vedânta philosophy teaches that everything in the universe lives and has its existence in God. It holds that the Divine reality manifests through the various stages of the evolution of nature, or *Prakriti*, or *mâyâ*, or divine Energy. The essence of the subject and the essence of the object are one on the highest spiritual plane alone, the fundamental principle being unity in variety of manifestation. Thus the absolute monism of the Vedânta is not the same as pantheism, which teaches that everything is God, or that God has become matter and force.

The Vedânta philosophy subordinates false reasoning—the result of imperfect understanding of the true nature of things—to that reason which leads to the realization of the ultimate Truth that is absolute and *one*. According to it the "unknown and unknowable" reality of Herbert Spencer's philosophy can be realized by the *Atman* or Divine Spirit, but it will always remain unknowable by the *mind*.

Mr. Dresser grasps to a certain extent, the qualified non-dualistic interpretation of the Vedânta philosophy by Râmânuja; but when he says that "the destruction of which (self-consciousness) is the one lesson of the *Upanishads*" our friend is utterly mistaken. The one theme of the *Upanishads* and the Vedânta philosophy is to establish through reason, logic, and science, the divine origin of self-consciousness and bring every individual soul back to its divine Source and make it realize its true divine nature. Frederick Schelegel said: "The divine origin of man (as taught by the Vedânta) is continually inculcated to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle and incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction * * Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun—faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished."

Victor Cousin says: "When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, above all those of India which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discover there many a truth and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy."—SWAMI ABHEDANANDA..

New York.

VEDANTA WORK IN NEW YORK

Lectures on the Vedânta philosophy were first delivered in New York in 1894 by Swâmi Vivekânanda, delegate to the Parliament of Religions in 1893 as the representative of this philosophy. The lectures were continued during 1894 and 1895. At this time a number of students formed themselves into a Vedânta Society, for the management of the business connected with the lectures and classes.

After a visit to England in the autumn of 1895, Swâmi Vivekânanda returned to New York, where he lectured during the winter to large audiences in Madison Square Concert Hall, besides delivering many class lectures. These latter have mostly been published in book and pamphlet form. In 1896, after the recturn of Swâmi Vivekânanda to England and later to India, a brother monk, Swâmi Sâradânanda, came from Calcutta to carry on the work. He lectured in New York, Montclair, Cambridge and many other places, until his return to India in 1898. Meanwhile, the Vedânta work had grown so fast that Swâmi Abhedânanda of the same order, who had been lecturing in London, England, for ten months, was invited to New York by the Vedânta Society, arriving in August, 1897. He lectured in Mott Memorial Hall from the end of September, 1897, to May, 1898. During the following summer he gave addresses in many States, being everywhere well-received by appreciative audiences. In October, 1898, the Vedânta Society was regularly incorporated under the laws of the States of New York. During the season of 1898-99 Swâmi Abhedânanda lectured for five months, beginning in November, in Assembly Hall on Twenty-second street, New York, again travelling and lecturing in New England and in other parts of the country during the summer.

Through the generous subscriptions and co-operation of students and friends, a headquarters for the Office and Library of the Vedânta Society was established in October, 1899, at 146 East Fifty-fifth street. This gave a new impetus to the work, the rooms being open daily for sale of literature, for class instruction and other business of the Society. For five months the Sunday lectures were given in Tuxedo Hall by Swâmi Abhedânanda, many of which have since been printed in pamphlet form. In the spring of 1900 the incorporators decided to invite the students and others interested in the work to become members of the Vedânta Society. Thus augmented and strengthened, the Society was able to be removed to new and desirable Headquarters at 102 East Fifty-eighth street, where it has the whole house. Without materially increasing the expenses, this provides a home for the Swâmi in charge, as he receives no remuneration for his services.

During the spring and summer months of 1900 Swâmi Abhedânanda lectured through the Middle and New England

States, meeting many people who were hungry for spiritual truths.

Swâmi Turiyânanda began his lectures in the Society rooms during the months of April, May and part of June.

In the month of June, 1900, Swâmi Vivekânanda, the founder of the Vedânta Society, gave a course of lectures and held classes in the new headquarters.

TRUSTEES: There are six trustees of the Vedânta Society, who form the Executive Committee to manage all business matters. These trustees are elected from the members of the Society.

The President is Dr. Herschell C. Parker of Columbia University, New York; Secretary, Miss J. Faure; Treasurer, Mr. Walter Goodyear.

The Society counts among its honorary members Dr. R. Heber Newton, pastor of All Souls' Episcopal Church, New York, and Prof. Charles R. Lanmann, Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University.

MEMBERSHIP: Although the Vedânta Society was established in 1894 and incorporated in 1898, it originally had no members outside of incorporators who formed themselves into committees to manage the necessary business connected with the work. As this continued to make steady growth, the trustees opened a membership roll in March, 1900.

YOGA CLASS: During the course of the season 1899-1900 Swâmi Abhedânanda formed a Yoga Class and gave practical lessons in breathing exercises, concentration, meditation and self-control to such earnest students as applied for instructions.

LIBRARY: For the benefit of the students of the Vedânta philosophy, a library was founded in the year 1899. A special feature is the rare and best books on the metaphysics, philosophy and religion of India, as well as of the West.

CHILDREN'S CLASS: This was established for instructing children in higher thoughts through parables and stories, of which India has been the storehouse for ages. Swâmi Abhedânanda was assisted in this undertaking by his co-worker and spiritual brother, Swâmi Turiyânanda of India.

During the Christmas festival of 1899 a Christmas tree was nicely decorated in the Vedânta Society rooms, and presents were distributed to all the young members of the Children's Class. The class was closed in April for the summer months.

The work of the season 1900-1901 has been most successful and encouraging; it embraced twenty-six public lectures by Swâmi Abhedânanda at Carnegie Lyceum, which brought the sublime truths of Vedânta before the thoughtful and cultured audiences, reaching many to whom this grand philosophy of the Orient was unknown. This season's work has shown conclusively that the religion and philosophy of Vedânta are able to answer the questions and solve the problems of life, and to fulfil the spiritual aspirations of human souls; these lectures have attracted the attention of the public and have added to the Society many new members who are earnest and sincere seekers after Truth.

In addition to the public lectures, many classes for instruction of advanced students, of those who have recently begun studying Vedânta, and of children were held at the rooms of the Society. The Christmas festival of children's class of 1900 was a very gratifying success; the simple exercises were most impressive.

During the summer months Swâmi Abhedânanda travelled extensively in the West; he gave lectures and held classes under the auspices of the Vedânta Society of San Francisco. He also gave a lecture on Vedânta philosophy before the Philosophical Union of the University of California at Berkeley.—*The Pacific Vedântist*, February 1902, pp. 18-20.

NEW YORK LETTER.

New York, November, 1902.

According to the usual custom of the Vedânta Society, the regular winter season opened with a public lecture in Carnegie Lyceum on the first Sunday in November, and the large audience which gathered to listen to it bore witness to the fact that interest in the Vedânta teaching, as expounded by Swâmi Abhedânanda, is still steadily increasing. That the organization should thus year after year not only stand the test of the long summer holiday, but show an added vitality at its close is the best proof of the firmness of the foundation on which it has been reared.

Growth, however, inevitably means change, and each season necessarily calls for some readjustment to meet new conditions. Last year the effort of the summer was directed towards renovating and improving the Society House; this year it was chiefly expended in revising the Society's circular and in making various modifications in the general organization. Little alteration, however, appears in the ordinary routine. The work of the Yoga classes has been somewhat broadened; but the Tuesday evening lectures remain the same, and at present the Swâmi is devoting them to a study of the *Bhagavad Gitâ,* his exposition being so full of illumination and helpfulness as to arise universal enthusiasm. A little increase in power is also manifest in the Sunday lectures, which are followed with the closest attention despite the abstract character of the subjects. Those for November and December are: *The Aim of True Religion, Evolution and Religion, Philosophy and Religion, Existence of God, Has God any Form?, Necessity of Symbols, Worship of Truth, Divine Principle in Man, Son of God.*

It was a source of deep gratification to all his friends and disciples that Swâmi Abhedânanda was able to spend two months of his holiday in Europe. He sailed from New

York during the first week in August and after an extended trip through England and Scotland, crossed to the Continent, visited the most important places in Switzerland and closed his journey by a pleasant ten days in Paris. The good results of the complete change and rest are already apparent in the large store of intellectual and spiritual strength which he has brought back to his work, and which must bear rich fruit before the end of the season.—*The Pacific Vedântin*, December 1902, p. 2.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service in honour of the blessed Swâmi Vivekânanda was held by the Vedânta Society of New York in the Society House on the afternoon of Sunday, October 26th.

It was not possible to organize an earlier meeting because of the dismembered condition of the Society during the summer months. Scarcely a handful of students, indeed, could have been gathered together at the time when the sad news of the Swâmi's passing away reached New York, and out of consideration for the many devoted disciples and friends who would have felt it a real deprivation not to be present, it was deemed best to postpone the commemorative service until all had returned to the city.

The wisdom of this decision was abundantly proved by the eager response to the invitation made by every one. Not only did the regular members come in large numbers, but also many outside friends who in devotion to their former Master, travelled, some of them, long distances to do honour to his memory. The masses of flowers which filled the rooms bore equally strong testimony to the tender regard in which he was held. Everywhere were they banked in profusion but especially about the platform on which stood the Swâmi's portrait linked by garlands and the soft silk of a turban to the picture of Râmakrishna, hanging above under the star.

The services opened with prayers, meditation, and an address by Swâmi Abhedânanda, during which were read extracts from the letters of brother Swâmis in India, describing the wonderful passing out of the Great Soul. Although his emotion was so intense as at times well nigh to master him, Swâmi Abhedânanda was none the less able to bring home forcefully to his listeners all that they owed to Swâmi Vivekânanda as the daring Pioneer who had first proclaimed the lofty teachings of Vedânta to America.

Dr. Parker, the President of the Society, next dwelt with earnest reverence upon what it had meant to us and to the world to have known so profound a thinker and so great a spiritual leader, and how irretrievable must be his loss to all concerned in the uplifting of the human race. In conclusion he offered in the name of the Society the following resolutions:

Resolved: *First*, That the members of the Vedânta Society and the students of the Vedânta philosophy feel how great and irreparable has been the loss to the Society in the untimely passing away of the Blessed Swâmi Vivekânanda, the founder, Master and spiritual Director of the Vedânta Society of New York.

Second, That the Society expresses deep sorrow and sends heartfelt sympathy to his brother Sannyâsins, disciples, followers and co-workers residing in the monastery at Belur, in Madras and other parts of India, in Europe and America.

Third, That it is the desire of the Society to hold Memorial Services in a public hall in honour of Swâmi Vivekânanda, and to raise funds to perpetuate his memory as the founder of the Vedânta Society.

Fourth, That a copy of these resolutions be filed in the records of the Vedânta Society and be sent to the magazines published here and in India.

After Dr. Parker, Mr. Goodyear, the Society's treasurer and a warm personal friend of the Swâmi Vivekânanda, in his turn paid glowing tribute to him, as did another disciple, Dr. Street. Miss McLeod, who has been with the Swâmi not only here but in his own country, told how India was near to his heart, while Miss Sarah Farmer, the founder of the Summer School for the Comparative Study of Religions at Green Acre, who was prevented from being present, wrote of him in the following terms:

"My duty is here, but in reality my spirit will be with you all as you bear witness to the spiritual uplift which under God you all received from this dear brother. To know Vivekânanda was a renewed consecration; to have him under one's roof was to feel empowered to go forth to the children of men and to help them all to a realization of their birthright as sons of God. What Green Acre owes to him cannot be put into words. A little band of people had started to prove the providing care of God for those who rely upon Him in utter faith and love. This great soul came into our midst and did more than any other to give to the work its true tone, for he lived every day the truths which his lips proclaimed, and was to us the living evidence of the power manifested nineteen hundred years ago as he went about his Father's business in perfect joyousness and childlike trust, without 'purse or script' and found all promises fulfilled, all needs met. Forever after, as he grew in knowledge and power, his influence increased among us and helped to strengthen our faith, and today his power for good is even greater and will continue to be, if we are true to Him who worketh in us 'to will and to do His good pleasure'.

"When the news of the transition of this beloved servant of God reached us, we assembled in the grove consecrated to him and his brothers and under the 'Prophets' Pine' and gave thanks to God for what he had been to us, for what he is now and will ever continue to be. It was a blessed hour, and I pray that tomorrow the Spirit of God will move mightily among you all, leading each to know the Unity of God, and find that in Him we are all one, visibly and invisibly, clothed upon with Him who is our Sun and Shield.

"May this transition give a renewed impetus to his work both here and in the far East. I shall always give thanks that I was permitted to work at his side when the first precious seeds were planted in New York. God bless you all!"

Mrs. Ole Bull, who fortunately arrived from Europe just in time to attend the Service, and who like Miss Farmer had witnessed the incalculable good accomplished by Swâmi Vivekânanda at Green Acre as well as in other parts of the United States and at home among his own people, made an eloquent appeal for earnest workers, who in return for the priceless spiritual teaching which India had sent to them, would go out to aid her in the reconstruction of her social fabric, not by offering her new ideals, but by helping her men and women to value those given to them ages ago by their own Great Teachers..

So impressive and so convincing were her words that few could have heard them without feeling the desire to share in the noble work already begun by Râmkrishna's disciples; and when at the close Swâmi Abhedânanda in ringing tones recited Swâmi Vivekânanda's *Song of the Sannyâsin,* every heart must have felt renunciation a privilege, and the voice which had first uttered that loud call to freedom worth following, wherever it might lead.—*The Pacific Vedântin, November* 1902, pp. 9, 10, 11..

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA ON THE PACIFIC COAST

On July 29, 1901, Swâmi Abhedânanda of India, who lectures in New York under the auspices of the Vedânta Society, arrived from that city at 9 a.m., via the Northern and Southern Pacific Railroads, after visiting the Yellowstone National Park, Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. While in San Francisco he made headquarters at the home of Dr. Logan, 770 Oak Street, it being the regular headquarters of the Vedânta Society. On Wednesday evening, July 31st, a reception was tendered the Swâmi in the banquet hall of the residence. A large and interested audience of members and their friends crowded the hall. Many and fine were the toasts called and responded to. The evening passed rapidly into the small hours of the morning, sparkling with wit, wisdom and good cheer. On the following day the newspapers commented kindly and favourably, giving the Swâmi's picture.

The Swâmi entertained the class at the regular Thursday evening meetings during his stay in this city. On Sunday, September 1st, at 3 p.m. he gave a public lecture at Union Square Hall upon the subject *What is Vedânta*. The audience was large, intelligent and exceedingly interested; after which an hour was devoted to questions and answers; this was highly appreciated by the people. Friday, September 6th, at 8 p.m. the Swâmi lectured (by invitation) before Philosophical Union of the University of California at the hall of Philosophy, Berkeley, Prof. Howison presiding. The hall was filled to its utmost by members and friends. The Swâmi and his lecture were received with enthusiastic applause. On September 7th the Swâmi left for Los Angeles where he remained ten days, visiting all points of interest in that semi-tropical climate. The Los Angeles class tendered him a reception at the home of Dr. Schmitz. The Swâmi made his headquarters at Lincoln Park as guest of Mrs. Mead.

While on the Pacific Coast the Swâmi visited all places of interest including Shânti Ashram, Lick Astronomical Observatory on Mt. Hamilton, San Jose, Yosemite Valley, Big Trees, San Diego, Point Loma, Golden Gate Park, Cliff House, Seal Rocks, the suburbs and Bay Counties. Mt. Tamalpais trip "above the clouds" was a memorable family excursion and picnic.

From about the 6th to the 10th of August he visited his brother Swâmi Turiyânanda, at the Ashram. At San Jose he was entertained at the Vendome by Mr. and Mrs. Wollberg; while at that fashionable hostelry he was prevailed upon to address several large assemblages, the daily press commenting favourably thereafter. This was August 11th to 16th, after which he made a ten-day tour of beautiful Yosemite and its environments, where he communed with nature in her sublimest mood, and meditated beneath those giant Sequoias, ancient sentinel of the high Sierras.

The two public lectures that were delivered under the auspices of the San Francisco Society were stenographed and will be published. (The first appeared in the April, VEDANTA). During his short stay amongst us the Swâmi made a host of friends and a permanent place within the hearts of us all. The occasion was one that will always keep us entwined in sweet memories.

On September 19th the Swâmi passed through San Francisco, en route from Los Angeles to his New York home to take up the new season's work. On his way he visited Salt Lake, Denver, Colorado Springs, Manitu, Pike's Peak, Chicago, Detroit, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Pan American Exposition at Buffalo and many other places of interest. The Swâmi made many acquaintances during his extensive travels and was kindly received and entertained by a multitude of friends and students of Vedânta philosophy, both en route and at destinations. Thus sowing the seed of the sublime truths of Vedânta Religion in the hearts of truth-seeking people, Swâmi Abhedânanda returned to New York and resumed his classes and lectures on the 3rd of November for the season of 1901-1902.

The following are the subjects of his public lectures at Carnegie Lyceum, New York: March 2nd, *Secret of Work;* 9th, *Duty or Motive in Work;* 16th, *Heredity and*

Reincarnation; 23rd, *Buddhism and Vedânta;* 30th, *Worship of Divine Mother,* (repeated by request).

April 6th, *Efficacy of Prayer;* 13th, *Was Christ a Yogî?* (repeated by request); 20th, *Salvation Through Love;* 27th, *What is an Incarnation of God?*

The Swâmi has in press a beautiful new work, *How to be a Yogî.—The Pacific Vedântin,* May 1902, pp. 26-27.

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA'S *SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT*

During the month of April the San Francisco Class was treated, amongst other good things to Swâmi Abhedânanda's *Spiritual Unfoldment,* a little booklet composed of the three following lectures: 1, *Self-control,* II, *Concentration and Meditation,* III, *Godconsciousness.*

I *Self-control*: The Swâmi speaks first of the non-essentials and the essentials of religion. Self-knowledge and self-control being the essentials. Self-control means the control of the lower self, or the animal nature of man, by developing the higher powers that are latent in every individual soul. He shows how the mind becomes attached to sense pleasures, sometimes becoming a slave to the senses. How from simple desire ruling passions are developed. Desire, passion and anger being progressive states of one and the same thing; the after results of which are jealousy and hatred.

The source of desires "are the outcome of the dormant passions in our minds, or the awakened state of these impressions". He compares the mind substance to the sea, "the surface of which is the conscious plane, the dormant passions lie buried deeply beneath". When conditions are favourable these deep impressions are stirred up, "they may be said to arise from the bottom of the sea of the mind in the form of minute bubbles". "We may call these bubbles the subtle states of desire, or the awakened impressions. After playing near the surface of the mental sea for a time and accumulating more force and many new bubbles, they eventually "burst into a wave and agitate the whole sea of the mind," driving the individual headlong toward the object of his new passionate desire. * * * After the mental tempest has spent all of its force, a period of calm repose follows, at which time self-control is again regained.

The Swâmi shows how by removing these bubbles of desire by attacking them while small and weak any one can gain self-control.

II. *Concentration and Meditation*: In this lecture the Swâmi shows how the Divine powers latent in every individual may be made manifest through Râja Yoga, or the royal road to the realization of Truth by the path of concentration and meditation. "There is no power in the universe higher than that which comes through concentration. The power acquired by its practice can control all the physical forces of nature." He shows how Christian Scientists, Mental Healers, Faith Healers and all others of a similar kind use this force.

The simplest form of concentration is known as attention. He shows how all animals practise attention. "The diverging rays of mental energy are focused into one channel," without which there could be no great scholar or any great achievement or invention. The majority of all suffering and sickness is the result of inattention to the laws of life and health. "As a gardener by severe pruning forces the sap of a tree into one or two vigorous buds * *," so can one, by voluntary effort bring all the mental powers to bear on one point, and this is called *Dhâranâ.*

The chief mystery of this world is one's self; the Yogi, therefore, concentrates upon that mystery.

The five mental stages of the mind are dwelt upon in rapid review. The fourth stage, or one-pointed condition gradually leads to the fifth, which is perfect control; this leads from concentration to meditation proper, "which is a continuous unbroken flow of one current of thought toward a fixed ideal". The Swâmi shows how to attain to this ideal condition. "No sage, whether a Buddha or a Christ, no saint, whether of the past or present, has ever found peace without practising meditation."

III. *Godconsciousness*: The soul in each individual is a centre of that circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. "In India from the Vedic period down to the present time this attainment of spiritual perfection or Godconsciousness has been regarded as the highest aspiration and loftiest aim of humanity." Moral man makes the mistake that he is religious. This state of moral responsibility is but the linking step between the animal man and the moral man. When moral man can no longer be tempted by sense attractions he becomes a spiritual being.

The human ego must go through three states and many subdivisions before the goal is reached. In the first the animal nature must be passed and overcome by the moral nature; next, the moral nature must develop into the spiritual nature; lastly, realization of Godconsciousness comes.

This last lecture of the series directs the seeker after this Divine ideal into the correct path and gives warning of all pit-falls.

There are as many ways to Truth as there are those who seeks it. No method is condemned, this being characteristic of Vedânta.

This last lecture of the trinity is an inspired one, to give an adequate review of which would be impossible by any other than a Yogî. It must be read and re-read in conjunction with the others of the series to be appreciated. When re-read many times, it will still be full of new and profound thoughts.—M. H. L., *The Pacific Vedântin*, June, 1902, pp. 3, 4, 5.

ABHEDANANDA OFFERS SOLUTION OF TRUSTS.

"MEN BACK OF THEM MUST BE EDUCATED TO UNITY OF HUMANITY" says the *Hindu*.

* * * * * *

Ethical culture, or the development of humanitarianism, as the only solution for trusts and John D. Rockefeller, was among the startling things suggested Sunday night by Swâmi Abhedânanda, the Hindu philosopher, in a masterly lecture on "India's Contribution to Modern Ethics," at the Auditorium under the auspices of the Committee for Ethical Lectures of Atlanta. M. H. Wilensky introduced the speaker.

"The fundamental teachings of the Vedic law are expressed in three Sanskrit words," said the Swâmi.

"Their meaning is as follows: 'Control thyself; give freely to the needly; be compassionate to all living beings.' These are the basis of all ethical thought, no matter what may be the religious creed. It is only by practising these laws that there will be found a remedy for those evils which exist in the world today, by practising the doctrine of non-resistance to evil and doing good to all men.

MUST EDUCATE TRUST LEADERS:

"Changing external conditions or administrations will never relieve the people from the oppression of trusts and monopolies. The men back of them must be educated to see unity of humanity, to feel for others as they do for themselves. What does it profit when John D. Rockefeller gives $1,000,000 to education, then raises the price of oil and makes many more millions? Like other millionaires, he is followed blindly by thousands of Americans to whom the word 'great' means 'wealthy,' who fall into the abyss of greed and ambition for material gain, from which we should strive to be delivered.

"Socialism will never bring a solution, for it cannot control the greed of the individual through the government. Your republic has not been able to bring a solution, despite the fact that all men are born free and equal. The only proper method is to develop a feeling for others. Then you will have heaven on earth, peace and good will. The millennium will come with the recognition of the unity of humanity."

Sunday afternoon a large audience heard Swâmi Abhedânanda at Cable Hall on *Reincarnation*, under the auspices of the Atlanta Psychological Society. Sunday morning he spoke in the Universalist church.

He leaves today for New York."

—*The Constitution*, Atlanta, Georgia. Tuesday, March 4, 1913.

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA SAYS HE COMES NOT AS A *MISSIONARY*.

* * * * * * *

Swâmi Abhedânanda, the Hindu philosopher and leader in America of the Vedânta belief, says that he comes to Atlanta not in the role of a "missionary," as he has been hailed.

"I do not come to convert the Christians to the religion of India," he said on Monday afternoon at the first of his series of lectures at the Unitarian church. "I am here by special invitation of the Atlanta Psychological society and my purpose is simply to explain our philosophy so that we may be better understood all over the world."

He spoke Monday on *Spiritual Unfoldment*. He said that this unfoldment must come from within. He argued that the soul of man is eternal, and eternal means birthless as well as deathless, he said, for it is an immutable law of nature that that which is born will die, while the eternal exists always.

"He who does not believe in God is called an athiest by the Western world," he said, "but Vedânta says, 'He who does not believe in himself is an athiest'."

—*The Constitution*, Atlanta, Georgia, March 4, 1913.

TEACHER OF PHILOSOPHY OF INDIA HERE

* * * * * *

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA SAYS THERE IS A SECRET OF LIFE NOT CONTAINED IN ANY ONE RELIGION.

* * * * * *

BY ROBERT H. WILLSON:

When the Christian world has been engaged for a century or more in sending its missionaries to India, what is it that the priests of the Hindus are now bringing back to America and England?

The question was put to Swâmi Abhedânanda, who has recently come to San Francisco and gathered around him a circle of followers known as the Vedânta Ashram.

"There is a secret of life not contained in any one religion," said the Swâmi. "The priests of the Vedânta do not seek converts. They would make clear to every man the spiritual understanding of his own religion."

Among the most enthusiastic followers of Swâmi Abhedânanda is the wife of a San Francisco clergyman occupying pulpit of an orthodox church. She says the teachings of the Swâmi are revelations of a higher Christianity.

With this strange paradox of a priest of the Hindus coming back to teach Christianity to Christians, the views of the Swâmi take on a peculiar interest.

The greatest of the Swâmis to come to America was probably Vivekânanda. Abhedânanda is his associate and a fellow disciple of Srî Râmakrishna, the great modern Master of the Vedânta philosophy. It was in answer to a message from Vivekânanda that Abhedânanda came to San Francisco.

WANDERS FOURTEEN YEARS

The Swâmi's preparation for the priesthood entailed a period of fourteen years of wandering through India "without purse or script," sleeping by the roadside or beneath a tree and talking of the spiritual side of life to those who would listen. He was a monk of that ascetic type common to the early orders in the Christian church. He left his native country after he became recognized as a great teacher and went to London. After several years there he came to New York and a few months ago arrived in San Francisco.

Here is a sketchily reported interview with the Hindu philosopher, touching upon only a few of the high spots in a discussion involving the profounder thoughts of science, philosophy and religion.

"What is it that you have to say to San Francisco?"

"That the Kingdom of Heaven is within you," replied the Swâmi with a smile to indicate that he realized the futility of so familiar an answer. The explanation was more complex.

"There is within every human being the self or the soul that may know itself. Thought does not know itself. Behind thought is that which knows thought. Then to open the eyes of those who see but dimly is the mission of Vedânta."

"That raises one of the objections of the West to the ancient philosophies of the Orient," was suggested to the Swâmi. "They are too contemplative for the activities of modern."

SEE ACTION IN INACTION.

"We learn," he replied, "to see action in inaction. That is one of the highest conceptions of which the human mind is capable. Behind inertia is the Knower of All, the source of action."

"But to come down to the problems with which the daily lives of men are surrounded—the conflict between good and evil, the question of heaven and hell—what has Vedânta to offer?"

"There is neither good nor evil but as a man thinks. Good and evil are two aspects of One which is neither good nor evil, but Absolute."

The Swâmi's answer was profound and spiritual, but it suggested an age-old question;

"There is a natural law in the material world which causes the big fish always to eat the little ones. Will it not always appear to the little fish that this is so?"

"But," said the Swâmi, "it is one of the manifestations of the material world that energy is indestructible. We need only see that the one within who directs energy, is imperishable and absolute. The Vedânta philosophy teaches that the source of consciousness cannot be found in matter, but stands independent of it. The life of the little fish merely encounters a change, such as is common to all life."

"Then the life of the individual may at any time be merged with a larger life?"

UNEXPLAINABLE "*I*"

"Life merges and separates and merges again," explained the Swâmi, "but the "*I*" cannot be explained by any."

THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE INSTITUTE

AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC

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June 1, 1945.

Mrs. M. Hebard LePage
Abhedananda Acres Box 12,
Pearblossom, California.

Dear Mrs. LePage:

This will acknowledge your letter of May 16. Since its receipt, I have been checking very carefully with our yearbooks covering the first decade of the century and have discovered virtually the same information that you put into your letter.

The only mention made of Swâmi Abhedânanda in our record for 1905-1906 is in connection with his six lectures on *India,* which were given on Tuesday evenings from November 14 to December 19, 1905 under the auspices of our Department of Political Science.

The following Year-book records his six lectures on *Great Religious Teachers,* which were held from January 8 to February 12, 1907 on Tuesday evenings, under the joint auspices of our Departments of Philology and Philosophy. I do find, however, that Swâmi Abhedânanda is also enlisted in this book as one of the five members of the Committee on Oriental Languages and Literatures of the Institute's Department of Philology.

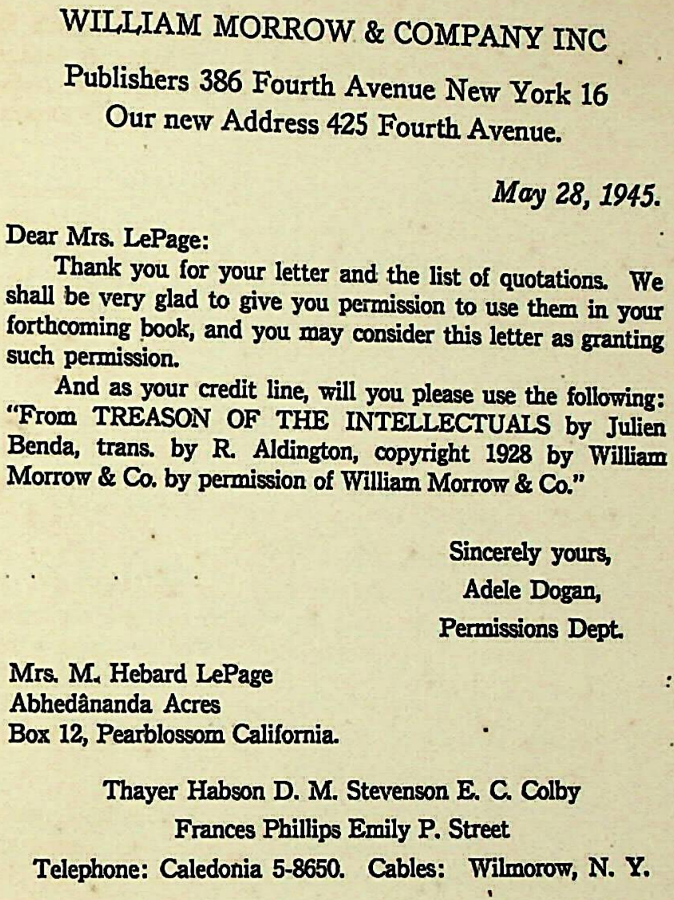
In the Year-book for 1907-1808, he is again listed as a member of this Committee. On Wednesday afternoons from November 13 to December 18, 1907, he gave six lectures on *Religious Ideals in India* under the joint auspices of our Departments of Philology and Philosophy.

The last mention of him that I can find is in our Year-book for 1908-1909 where it is stated that he gave six lectures on *The Philosophy and Religion of the Vedas.* These were given Thursday afternoons from November 12 to December 17, 1908 under the auspices of our Department of Philology. In this book, he is no longer listed as a member of the Committee on Oriental Languages and Literatures.

So far as I can determine, the Institute was never empowered to confer the Ph.D. degree. The nearest thing to it, according to our constitution, would be either an Honorary Membership or a Fellowship in the Institute, but our records show that Swâmi Abhedânanda received neither of these honours here. It may be of interest to you that each time his name is given in our Year-books, the title of Ph.D. is appended to it. However, there is no reference to the institution that conferred that degree upon him.

I believe my letter covers all the information available here on Swâmi Abhedânanda. Nevertheless, should you have any further clues, please let me know. I shall be glad to investigate them.

Sincerely yours,
Julius Bloom, Director.



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May 28, 1945.

Dear Mrs. LePage:

Thank you for your letter and the list of quotations. We shall be very glad to give you permission to use them in your forthcoming book, and you may consider this letter as granting such permission.

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Mrs. M. Hebard LePage
Abhedânanda Acres
Box 12, Pearblossom California.

Thayer Habson D. M. Stevenson E. C. Colby
Frances Phillips Emily P. Street
Telephone: Caledonia 5-8650. Cables: Wilmorow, N. Y.

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